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A LIFE OF
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This book, devoted to the memory of
CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN, is

Dedicated to

MARY ANDERSON,

whose example, a cheering signal to all womanhood, may be united to that of her great sister in art; and whose genius, of like quality with that of Charlotte Cushman, remains unmatched in the history of the stage for its untaught force and its instant power over the hearts of men. Such pure, lofty and impressive spirits in the service of the stage uphold the dignity of the acted drama and its value as a rightful part of human experience and emotion.

W. T. PRICE.

PREFACE.

TO be in point of time, the first great American actress is a peculiar distinction, and will always lend to the name of Charlotte Cushman an eminence that will be sustained by the record of her work. She stands as the exponent of the right theory of acting, that it is but the extension of the faculty of the poet, informed with the powers of the imagination blended with thought and feeling; that its purpose is real, and not merely mimetic; that it takes hold upon worthy things, and that the office of the player may have all the dignity and importance of genius exercised in a manner profitable to man. This woman was superior to the academic and traditional, valuable as they are on the stage. A saving incident of her fame is that it is based on the excellence of Shakspeare, Sir Walter Scott, and Dickens.

In her the American stage reached an elevation assuredly not below the point marked by

PREFACE.

the career of Mrs. Siddons in England. Indeed, considering the versatility of her powers and the range of her achievements, her life-long and exclusive devotion to her art, her positive growth in effect with the years, and her vigorous intellectuality, Charlotte Cushman's right to a full share of preëminence with the greatest of the Kembles, in the history of the English-speaking stage, is very clear. In this view it is believed that a closer study of her stage career than has been given to it is a proper and not a superfluous task. This book is simply an adjustment of the record, which, in many particulars, was in danger of being obscured by errors and by friendly and unfriendly misapprehensions. The dates and facts have been carefully collated from the newspapers of the day. It is a vain task to multiply words on such a simple and beautiful fame, and Charlotte's career will here be found unincumbered with the débris of forgotten things. Yet such detail as is helpful to an appreciation of her pathetic bondage to obscurity in the early years is fully set forth. The private life of Charlotte Cushman may be found in the biography written by her intimate friend Miss Stebbins, but

PREFACE.

the fame of the great actress lies, of course, in her public career. In the matter of criticism I have given precedence always to the testimony of her contemporaries, and have sought to give room to simple fact, and to provide the material itself for the reader's appreciation of her genius. Thus the text of a few of her great scenes is given.

The life of this great character should illuminate the way for those young women of the stage who seek to reach the uplands by the path of purity that the stage does afford; and many a home, in existence and to be, will it bless, should it deter the incompetents from setting out on the hopeless journey. And so it is that Charlotte Cushman's fame and character may well be a theme for the fireside as well as for him who gossips merely of stage things "long ago betid."

W. T. PRICE.

NEW YORK, February, 1894.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE,	i
I. FORMATIVE INFLUENCES,	1
II. THE SEVEN YEARS OF TOIL AND TRAIN- ING,	19
III. THE SUDDEN BURST OF FAME: TRIUMPH IN ENGLAND: AND LIFE ABROAD, . . .	55
IV. EXTRAORDINARY POPULARITY IN AMERICA, .	70
V. MEG MERRILES,	79
VI. NANCY SYKES,	105
VII. MALE CHARACTERS: ROMEO, CARDINAL WOLSEY, ETC.,	119
VIII. QUEEN KATHERINE, LADY MACBETH, BIANCA, AND OTHER CHARACTERS, . .	144
IX. THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE CAREER, .	163
X. THE LAST DAYS,	173
INDEX,	181

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

CHAPTER I.

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES.

IT is one of the burdens of an editor's as of a manager's life to encounter the aspirants for the stage, and, on the whole, while the subject is a simple one, it is vexatious, for advice and facts are unheeded with great unanimity of perversity if one is dealing with the girl who is merely "stage struck."

In its worst sense the term "stage struck" implies that a girl, with her head turned in the contemplation of her own beauty, but without an understanding of the serious task before her, is willing to renounce family, relations, friends and social connections, in order to go on a life-long picnic in that dreamland that is measured by the footlights, the wings and the

back drop of a stage. Nothing can restrain this incompetent. Predestined ruin is her portion and that is an end of it.

But aptitude for the stage may be so strong that it would be unfair to include in the sweeping term all of those young women who press forward to tempt fortune. We will assume, then, that some of these young women are fitted for the career, or, in common with their friends, believe that they possess all the qualities requisite for success.

We will assume that the young aspirant has what is called beauty. Youth is commonly attractive and comely, and in private life there are many associations and friendships that give meaning to the smiles and zest to the sparkle of the eye which—amazing as it may seem—have no force on the stage. A woman who may be very charming under the contributory influences of the fireside and social surroundings may be a cheerless kind of person when she is acting the part that does not belong to her own life and identity. More than that, the very lineaments that make beauty on the stage effective must be of a certain type that does not always include the belle of the town by any means. The features must be clear cut,

the eyes must have a certain carrying power, while the voice must be resonant and distinct, and back of quick physical energy and endurance there must be an intelligence of no common kind. There can be no doubt that every woman who succeeds on the stage is beyond the ordinary in many particulars. Has your beautiful woman these other qualities in stock? Has she the strong heart, that, while it does not throw aside modesty, can confront the public with force and precision in every movement, utterance and look? It will be readily seen that beauty is but a trifling thing in itself, unsupported by other requisites. If Adelaide Neilson had not been able to *act*, she would never have reached this side of the Atlantic; her lustrous eyes and delicate charms would never have become the possession of the public. They would have had a different market. With this hint, which may be read as deeply as the wise girl may choose, let us hope that she will yield her honest beauty to some honest heart, even if it be in trade, and tarry at home.

There is no half-way success in a theatrical career, at least as measured by the ambitions of a beginner. You become a player at a

meagre and uncertain salary, and all sorts of vicissitudes will beat on you if you do not gain the topmost honors or a position of independence.

These words are not addressed to the girl who seeks a position in the chorus of an opera company or the ballet, for in such a case the ballet manager will take the question out of the hands of yourself and your admiring friends, and judge of your fitness by examining your thumbs. There is a market for that kind of beauty, and the majority of those that offer themselves are in need of the money, and they honestly earn it.

The proper estimate to put on beauty for the stage is that its value depends entirely upon its union with other indispensable qualities. It may even provide a brief career of prosperity, but every one acquainted with the stage, particularly the metropolitan stage, knows that poverty and failure inevitably attend upon the fair one with the golden locks, or the damsel with the raven tresses, or the midnight eyes, or what not, who cannot *act*. So, maidens, beware !

We have said it, and it stands : A beautiful woman may take part in a play—this beginner

—and with each proof of incompetence, with each scene of lost opportunities, her comeliness will grow paler, the light will go out of her eyes, the tread of the haunch, so firm in the beginning, will implore help which no mortal can give her to direct her footsteps to that particular spot on the stage where she was going to get a portion of dramatic glory; no roses of triumph in her cheek; no smile of confidence pulling up the corners of her kissable mouth; nothing there but pallor and perdition, with the back hair half-a-notion to tumble down and to asseverate that, of all things on this globulous compost of earth and water, a woman of charming exterior and no insides, is most to be pitied.

We have said it and it shall stand recorded: A beautiful woman—who can predominate in a play, who can keep the sparkle in her eye, who can establish herself in the middle of the stage as the sole lessee and proprietor for a material space of time, and then and there have bestowed on her the plaudits of the multitude—is something to offer praise for. In such a case we must admit that there is some value in the gifts that are given with a generosity that is significant of special favor, to

woman. But the heart and the mind must animate the clay.

Charlotte Cushman was never accounted beautiful; her sister was charming to look upon; the relation of their qualities to success will be seen later on.

Charlotte Saunders Cushman held her descent in the eighth generation, from that Robert Cushman, who, with other exiles for conscience sake, in Holland, got together the original colony that first came over in part in the Mayflower, and established Puritanism in the virgin territory that became the State of Massachusetts. He was the business agent of the Puritans, and followed them, in July, 1620, in the "Fortune," a little craft of fifty-five tons, far less in burthen than the caravel that bore Christopher Columbus across the ocean waste less than two centuries before that time. This resolute man, ready in making a close trade, and vigorous as an expounder of the gospel, has left evidence of himself, a valued trophy of history, in the form of the first sermon delivered and printed in America—and often reverently reprinted—on "The Sin of Selfishness."

This discourse is significant of his authoritative position in that he was not a preacher;

yet his plain words on "fat feeding," his quaint scorn of worldly pretension, and his reference to the falling away from simplicity of the Virginia colonists, indicate that he was a representative spirit, who, on the eve of his departure for England, could speak with authority. He had his debortation and exhortation, his divisions and subdivisions, and, on the whole, his sermon was something to digest and sleep over.

Robert Cushman was in every way the trusted companion of Bradford, Standish, and the leaders, and was still the agent at the date of his death in England, in 1626. The tombstone of his son Thomas is yet to be seen, recommending him to posterity for his forty years of faithful service in the church. Marriage intermingled the stock with the Lathrops and other distinguished families, all of which is set forth with distinct satisfaction in a book of genealogy by one of the Cushmans of these days.

Charlotte Cushman's mother's stock was of like quality; the mother was a Babbitt. Her grandmother was Mary Saunders, of whom the faculty of mimicry is recorded, and at her knee the future actress, as a child, would sit and listen to the singing of a song in which the

birds chirped and the fowls of the farmyard made clatter in their respective ways; but without attempting to give importance to traces of special faculties, it is enough to say that Charlotte was furnished with a sound letter of credit by her ancestry. Her father, Elkanah—Puritan certainly in name—of a family that had clung to the soil, and was as true to its footing as the lichen on Plymouth Rock, became a coast trader, and his firm, Topliff & Cushman, sent their ships from Boston to numerous ports. Elkanah was not fortunate in business. In fact, some trusted sea captain or supercargo took such a strong hand in his affairs that Elkanah was eliminated from trade, and the seventh in descent from the great man of business, Robert Cushman, the Puritan, dropped out of worldly concerns, leaving Charlotte's mother, with five children, to wage war with want. There is every indication that this poverty was of a bitter kind, and the child of thirteen, who always had in her a marked pride of ancestry, early gave tokens of the resolve she so promptly undertook and faithfully kept of bringing the family back to the plane of comfort.

The collapse of the father, represented as an entirely honorable man, was complete. It be-

came necessary for him to look after the remnants of his business away from home, but it was not his death, as has been stated, that threw the family into its extreme discomforts. He died in Boston in 1841, aged 72. He was twice married; Susan being the oldest child by his second wife. There were six children of the first union, the wife being a Lathrop.

It is proper to note that Charlotte Cushman's immediate ancestors knew vicissitudes of fortune and worthily stood the test. It would be mere vanity to deny them this claim to our respect and sympathetic interest. The grandmother, a woman of shining qualities, had the courage to take up dressmaking in order to combat adversity, while her mother, before her marriage, taught school, no doubt using the splenetic slipper to good purpose in the ordained way. The genealogy also states that: "Her father for many years, at the sign of the Golden Rose, had been a hair dresser," before engaging in trade.

When Charlotte first stood on her tip-toes to look out on the world there is no reason to believe that her horizon revealed to her, to begin with, anything beyond the earnings of a teacher of music and of a singer in the church

choirs. It is not at all to the purpose to attach importance to anecdotes of childhood that represent her as a mimic. She was reproved—as other children have been reproved, and have tasted the birch for it—when she was observed to be sitting at the table, her face in her hands, with the exact look in her features of a visiting friend. As a child she saw something of the theatre, and as affairs afterwards shaped themselves, the experience when recalled, certainly had an influence. Her uncle Augustus Babbitt, a sea-captain, was a stockholder in the theatre, or was intimate with the Pelbys of the Tremont Theatre, and occasionally took the girl with him to the play house. She thus saw Macready, on his first visit to America, in "Coriolanus," and remembered Cooper and Mrs. Powell in "The Gamester." She recited well at school; but the stage was not in her mind. It was her voice that first suggested a means of livelihood. Her proficiency was notable at an early age, for we find her name in the programme of a public amateur concert in 1830, on which occasion she sang "Take This Rose." She was then in her fourteenth year. In certain manuscript notes prepared by the actress concerning her early life she describes

her voice: "It had almost two registers, a full contralto and almost a full soprano, but the lower voice was the natural one."

It is distinctly apparent that at no time of her life was Charlotte Cushman anything else than an extraordinary person. It is possible that her real brilliancy was ruled by a resolute soberness. The child, no doubt, was sedate, but discerning people were at hand from the beginning who saw her superiority. The help that was extended to her from the outset is proof of this. A friend supplied the means for a course of two years of instruction under John Paddon, the best music teacher of his day in Boston; a member of the subsequently famous Chickering piano firm, gave her the use of an instrument for practice in his sales-rooms—too poor she to own one—and it was through him that she was referred to Mr. and Mrs. Wood as an assistant in concerts given by these professionals. Mr. Wood, upon hearing her in private rehearsal, at once saw her uncommon merit. They engaged her for the necessary public appearances. Through them she became articulated to the Maeders, who were then appearing in opera,—James G. Maeder and his wife, Clara Fisher. They all assured her that her voice was remark-

able and that she had fortune and fame in her grasp. Charlotte readily accepted these auguries, but evidently, without undue elation, and, as was the way in those days, looked forward to gaining her prize by the process of slow steps and hard toil. Certainly the judgment of the Woods and the Maeders was competent. Mrs. Wood had been a favorite singer at Drury Lane, known as Miss Paton, and her romantic history, it may be said, in passing, included a marriage with Lord Lenox, and her desertion of him and flight to America with Joseph Wood. As further proof of the quality of Charlotte Cushman's voice is the fact that Maeder secured her immediate engagement as prima donna for the principal theatre in New Orleans under James H. Caldwell, that remarkable manager of the South and West; and they proceeded thither by way of Pittsburg and the river.

Charlotte's first appearance with the Maeders was April 8, 1835, as Almaviva in "The Marriage of Figaro," at the Tremont Theatre; her second as Lucy Bertram in "Guy Mannering," an operatic play that was to become so large a factor in her career. She was at this time in her nineteenth year, having been born in Boston,

23, 1816.

The young prima donna was, no doubt, incessantly active in opera from the date of her first appearance until the loss of the finer quality and reaches of her voice was discerned at New Orleans. Her ambition was fostered and sustained by extraordinary capacity for work, and a list of the roles essayed by her in this interval would serve to exemplify her industry and to establish the fact, which is of some importance, that her musical training and experience built for her the substantial foundation for her artistic achievements as an actress. Without, then, attempting to place on record an account of her work as a singer, it may be remarked that many such parts as Patrick in "The Poor Soldier," Count Bellino in "The Devil's Bridge," and others in "Rob Roy," "Cinderella," and "The Barber of Seville," some of which she afterwards used, were in this repertory. That the voice of the girl was very fine has been attested to this writer by those who knew her at this early period. A significant fact is that when she signed the contract with the Maeders her instructor, Paddon, claimed her as an articulated pupil, and a newspaper controversy sprang up over the matter.

When their pupil's voice began to fail, the Maeders, or some friend, commended her to Barton, Caldwell's tragedian and stage-manager. It is likely enough that the first thought of the effort in the direction of the dramatic stage, was Charlotte Cushman's own, for never was a woman readier to turn in the right way in emergencies. Self-reliance was very characteristic of her. At any rate Barton became enthusiastic about her. The friend and adviser came to her in the moment of need, another proof that there was nothing commonplace about this young woman. She appeared with success, after being coached by the stage manager, as Lady Macbeth, and soon thereafter sailed for New York, eager to push her fortunes in the true field for dramatic endeavor.

It is to be inferred that Charlotte's operatic work was not wholly interrupted by the loss of some of her notes, for it is stated somewhere that the announcement of her appearance as Lady Macbeth was a surprise. There is also some reason to believe that her dramatic work was not limited to the one performance. She at least spoke the prologue to a play by Rees, "The Martyr Patriots," produced by Caldwell.

James E. Murdoch in his reminiscences, "The Stage," throws some light on this period:

"It was during my visit to New Orleans also that I became acquainted with Miss Charlotte Cushman. She was a pupil of my esteemed friend, Mr. James G. Maeder, the celebrated professor and teacher of vocal music, and made a 'hit' in her début, and through the influence of Mr. Maeder was engaged to lead the opera business in St. Charles Theatre, of which he was musical director. I met her at the house of Mr. Maeder, who acted as her guardian while she pursued her musical studies, her friends in Boston being satisfied that she would enjoy great advantages in an association with Mrs. Maeder, a lady of refined manners and irreproachable character. Being much in the society of the Maeders, I frequently met, and had ample opportunity for being acquainted with, the young opera singer, and for observing her disposition both off and on the stage. The first time I saw her professionally was in the character of Patrick, in the operatic farce of 'The Poor Soldier.' Miss Cushman, in the proper costume of her sex in private life, appeared self-reliant and of easy and agreeable

manners, but in her soldier dress on the stage she challenged attention and asserted a power which impressed the beholder with an idea of fixed and determined purpose. Many years' acquaintance with Miss Cushman in public and in private life only confirmed the early impression made upon me by this great American actress. The St. Charles was one of the largest buildings of the kind in the United States, and the powers of a speaker or singer were taxed to the utmost for the production of the best vocal effects; and in consequence of the vigor of Miss Cushman's efforts to carry the citadel by storm, rather than by cautious approaches, in a short time she broke down her voice and destroyed her prospects as a singer. Her instructor had frequently warned her against the folly of attempting the accomplishment of what was not within the legitimate limits of her vocal powers; he had cautioned her against the tendency to undue force of expression, as calculated to produce throaty tones injurious to the voice. 'But,' said Mr. Maeder, 'the young lady knew better than her teacher; she was almost insane on the subject of display and effect, and altogether too demonstrative in the way of commanding

what is only to be obtained slowly and patiently—operatic success. Thus Miss Cushman, disregarding the injunction of an experienced and thoroughly-trained master of music, by her impatience of restraint ruined a fine voice, destroying all hope of operatic honors, and was compelled to turn her attention to the drama. In our company at the St. Charles was an actor of the old school, a gentleman of excellent qualities both as a scholar and a tragedian. He was a man of retiring disposition and studious habits, well versed in the traditions of the stage, and an admirer of the Kemble style of acting. He was very much such an actor as Charles Young, of the London stage, who was thought by some critics to occupy a middle place between Kemble and Kean, with much of the excellence of both these great performers, while others considered his style original, natural, and artistic, and in dramatic power equal to either of them. Mr. Barton, the gentleman to whom I allude, was stage-manager—a position for which he was peculiarly qualified by a familiar practical acquaintance with the business of acting, and consequently able to direct the acting of those who carried on the plot of the play; an accomplishment, by

the way, rarely to be met with in these later days. Miss Cushman, who was now turning her attention to the dramatic form of delineation, found in Mr. Barton an excellent instructor, and began a course of study to fit her for the change she had determined to make. Her voice had become hard and husky from overstrained efforts in singing, and, fulfilling the prediction of Mr. Barton had lost the pure quality of its tone. At the close of the season Mr. Barton, observing a marked improvement in his pupil, apparent in her expression of the parts she had studied and sustained under his instruction, finally cast the young actress for Lady Macbeth. The histrionic ability of Mr. Barton, his familiar acquaintance with the stage manners of many leading actresses, and particularly with the readings and business-performance of Mrs. Siddons as the consort of the guilty Thane, enabled him successfully to prepare his pupil for her arduous task. The tragedy was performed for the benefit of Mr. Barton, and the result was a brilliant audience and a complete triumph for Miss Cushman, whose Lady Macbeth was pronounced a great success."

CHAPTER II.

THE SEVEN YEARS OF TOIL AND TRAINING.

NOT less admirable than her genius was Charlotte Cushman's patient industry. Indeed one of the most remarkable chapters in her history is one which, for its full effect, is not susceptible of division into parts; it will span a stretch of toil without parallel in the career of any other actor of the first rank. Hodgkinson, in the early days of the American stage, played a greater number of parts, and stock actors of the old school were forced to do a vast amount of superficial work, but taken all in all, there is here a sweep of genius and labor, covering an extended field, that must command the tribute of surprise and applause. The brave young woman sped along night after night, winter and summer, suffering no rest,

having assumed the responsibilities of providing for her entire family, the ambition of art in her fostered, and not darkened, by the cares.

Miss Cushman promptly took her resolve soon as the applause of her triumph in her venturesome début in New Orleans, as *La Macbeth*, gave her assurance of the future. She made the voyage by sea from the southern city, and reached New York almost as soon as the news of her success. The impression that success was conveyed in positive terms somehow; but her acceptance was not too immediate. She addressed Simpson, the manager of the Park Theatre, but he delayed in giving her an answer. Hamblin, of Bowery, who must have been assured of her powers by some friendly and trustworthy authority, sought her out and offered her a trial and an engagement. It is plain that the policy of this astute manager was to make new reputations, and to combat the old and established Park Theatre, with its prestige and its possession of actors of achieved position, bringing forward new forces and new objects of public favor. At all events it was to him that Charlotte Cushman owed her beginning.

New York. She was practically penniless, and the manager supplied her with a theatrical wardrobe, a necessity in those days, by giving her credit with the costumers. A week or two of illness deferred her début, and, owing to the burning of the theatre, her engagement was cut short after the third night. She had appeared:

1836.

Sept. 12. As Lady Macbeth, with Hamblin.

" 13. "Helen MacGregor, and Mrs. Haller.

" 17. "Alicia, in "Jane Shore," and as Patrick, in "The Poor Soldier," and sang the "Song of the Sea," in character.

The theatre was destroyed by fire, and her engagement was at an end, with a debt for her wardrobe as its principal reminiscence. She forthwith obtained an engagement at Albany from Blake. The term of five weeks ran into five months; and according to Stone, her performance of male characters was a feature of this early work. While she had every confidence in herself her ambition was subordinated to her judgment, and she was watching for an opportunity to enter upon a stock engagement

in New York ; but she was practically not idle for one moment in this part of her career. She acted as a star in Detroit and Buffalo ; and after a short experience at the National, and just before taking up her duties at the Park, she stole a week or so for an appearance in Boston, which is thus spoken of by Clapp in his "Records of the Boston Stage :"

"In the months of May and June in 1837, Miss Charlotte Cushman gave the earliest taste of that dramatic spirit which she has since cultivated to such advantage. On the 3d of May she appeared as Lady Macbeth to Barry's Macbeth, and astonished everyone. She followed up her first triumph by playing Portia to C. H. Eaton's Shylock. and also performed Fortunato Falcone, Elvira and Morgiana. She announced thus early her predilection for male parts, by a performance of Henry, in 'Speed the Plough.' Although she had given up, by her assumption of these, all hopes of attaining eminence in the lyric drama, she sang 'Hail Columbia,' on Murdoch's benefit night, and was rapturously applauded."

At the National Theatre, late Italian Opera House, after having been underlined in the

words, "Miss Cushman is engaged;" Miss Cushman appeared:

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| <p>¹⁸³⁷
April 22. As Romeo.</p> <p>" 26. As Patrick in the comic opera of "The Poor Soldier."</p> | <p>¹⁸³⁷
April 27. As Count Bellino in the opera "The Devil's Bridge," with songs, and as Tom Tug in "The Waterman."</p> |
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The house was closed for some days, and then reopened in order to "complete engagements with stars."

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|---|--|
| <p>¹⁸³⁷
May 8. Charlotte Cushman as Lady Macbeth to J. W. Wallack's Macbeth.</p> <p>" 9. As Elvirato Wallack's Pizarro.</p> <p>" 11. As Romeo; Wallack as Mercutio; Mrs. Flynn as Juliet.</p> <p>" 12. As the Queen to Wallack's Hamlet; his benefit.</p> <p>" 13. As Meg in "Guy Mannering."</p> <p>" 16. As Helen McGregor in "Rob Roy."</p> | <p>¹⁸³⁷
May 17. As Meg.</p> <p>" 18. As Alicia in "Jane Shore."</p> <p>" 20. In the course of the evening "song by Miss Cushman."</p> <p>" 23. Tullia to the Brutus of J. R. Scott.</p> <p>June 15. In "A Great Bill" at the Bowery. The Ravel Family, the Bedouin Arabs, &c. Miss Cushman is announced in a song, "Hail Columbia."</p> |
|---|--|

Charlotte Cushman was now to enter upon her contract of three years at the Park Theatre,

her judgment seconding her ambition. Her goal was supremacy in her art, and this was the road to the highest distinction. The Park opened on August 27, and on Saturday night of that week she came forward in no pretentious way. As a matter of convenient arrangement and as affording the best preliminary survey of her work, a detailed list of her performances, based on the appearance of her name in the newspaper advertisements, is here submitted :

1837			
Aug. 26.	Patrick in "The Poor Soldier."	Sep. 12.	Cherubino in "The Marriage of Figaro," and Dorothy in "No Song, No Supper."
" 28.	Mrs. Tric-trac in "The Married Rake."	" 16.	Mary Wilson in "The Strange Gentleman."
" 31.	Countess de Novara in "A Peculiar Position."	" 18.	Forrest, returned from his trip to England, plays Othello, with Mrs. Richardson as Desdemona and Mrs. Sharpe as Emelia.
Sep. 2.	Countess de Novara in "A Peculiar Position."	" 19.	Cordelia to Forrest's Lear.
" 4.	Vittoria with Hill as Sy Saco in "The Knight of the Golden Fleece."	" 22.	Patrick, (Forrest in "Damon and Pythias.")
" 5.	Countess de Novara—on the 9th and 13th Mrs. Chippendale acts this part.	Oct. 6.	Goneril to Forrest's Lear.

- Sep. 14. Paul in "Pet of the Petticoats."
 Nov. 7. Christine in "The Two Queens."
 " 11. Christine.
 " 18. Laura, in "The Bride of Genoa."
 " 20. "
 " 29. "
 Dec. 4. Ellen Tree plays Christine.
 " 12. Mrs. Somerton in "My Neighbor's Wife."
 " 13. Patrick.
 " 19. Mrs. Somerton: probably Gon-eril again.
 " 30. Aladdin.
 1838
 Jan. 2. "
 " 4. "
 " 5. Probably Gon-eril, and Emma in "William Tell" with Forrest.
 " 8. Aladdin. (Mrs. Shaw appears as Hamlet).
 " 11. Aladdin.
 " 12. Nahmeokee to Forrest's Meta-mora.
 " 15. Aladdin.
 " 17. Eudiga in "Chas. XII."
 " 19. Aladdin.
 " 20. Constance in "The Love Chase;" Sher-idan Knowles was then in the fullness of his fame, and the play was a novelty on Jan. 13, done also on same evening by Wallack at the National. Mrs. Shaw was the Constance on the first performance at the Park.
 Jan. 23. Julia in "The Rival Pages," Mrs. Richardson, Victorine.
 " 24. "Love Chase" in the bill.
 " 25. Constance in "Love Chase," Riching's benefit; Mrs. Shaw had been playing Constance.
 " 27. Constance and Aladdin.
 " 31. Eudiga and "Barber of Seville."
 Feb. 1. Ellen Rivers in "Patrician and Parvenu," and Zulima in "Abon Hassan."
 " 2. Aladdin.
 " 3. Constance.
 " 6. Ellen.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| Feb. 8. | John Rolfe in
drama of
"Pochahontas"
and Constance. | March 1. | Christine, Zu-
Zu, and Za-
mine in the
"Cataract of
the Ganges,"
with Buckley's
equestrian stud. |
| " 9. | Christine. | " 3. | Zamine. |
| " 10. | Ellen. | " 5. | " and as
Helen in "The
Hunchback." |
| " 13. | Miss Cushman's
benefit: "This
evening will be
presented the
third act of
"Rob Roy,"
Helen MacGreg-
or, Miss Cush-
man, &c., after
which song by
Miss Cushman:
pas de deux by
Mr. and Mrs.
Checkini; to
conclude with
"The Two
Queens,"
Christine, Miss
Cushman;
Mary, Mrs.
Richardson." | " 6. | " |
| " 14. | Eudiga and
"Za-z-e-z-i-z-o-
zu," Miss Cush-
man Zu-zu. | " 7. | " |
| " 15. | Ellen. | " 8. | Queen Eliza-
beth in "Rich-
ard III.," Nea-
fie's benefit. |
| " 16. | Zu-zu. | " 9. | The Queen to
Mrs. Shaw's
Hamlet, and
Lydia in "Ag-
nes De Vere." |
| " 17. | " " and Ellen. | " 10. | Zamine and
Ellen. |
| " 20. | " " ; "Za-ze-
zi-zo-zu" also
at the National. | " 12. | Zuliema, Za-
mine, Zuzu. |
| " 21. | Aladdin. | " 14. | Zamine. |
| " 22. | Christine and
Zu-zu. | " 15. | Emily in "Sam
Weller," W.
R. Blake as
Sam Weller;
Chippendale
Pickwick. |
| " 23. | Patrick and Zu-
zu. | " 16. | Lydia in "Ag-
nes De Vere,"
and Zamine. |
| Feb. 28. | Zuliema. | " 17. | "Love Chase," |
| | | " 19. | Emily in "Sam
Weller;" and |
| | | " 20. | in addition Za-
mine, March 23 |
| | | " 22. | and Christine |
| | | " 26. | |
| | | " 27. | 24. |

Mar. 28.	Zamine.				
" 29.	Hermione in "Damon and Pythias" (Nea- fie); Julia in "Rival Pages."	May 14.			"Widow Mel- notte, Forrest as Claude and Mrs. Richard- son as Pauline;
" 31.	Emily.	" 15.			Patrick; on 15th Christine; 18th Emma in "Wil- liam Tell."
April 3.	"	" 16.			
" 5.	"	" 18.			
" 9.	Christine,	" 19.			Christine,
" 13.	Emily,	" 22.			Vittoria.
" 14.	Vittoria.	" 26.			Emily in "Sam Weller."
" 20.	Zuliema.	" 28.			Euphemia in the opera "Siege of Ro- chelle."
" 21.	Julia in "The Rival Pages."	" 29.			"Lady of Lyons."
" 24.	Christine.	" 30.			Euphemia prob- ably.
" 25.	Constance in "Love Chase," and Ellen.	" 31.			"Lady of Lyons; Paul.
" 28.	Constance and Aladdin.	June 2.			Helen in "Hunchback" and Aladdin.
" 30.	Ellen.	" 6.			Ellen, Emily.
May 3.	"	" 9.			Amaranth in "Wild Oats."
" 4.	Nahmeokee to Forrest.	" 10.			Widow Mel- notte, Ellen Tree as Paul- ine.
" 5.	Hermione in "Damon and Pythias," and Paul in "Pet of the "Petti- coats."	" 13.			Lady Teazle; Murdoch as Charles; Pla- cide as Sir Peter.
" 8.	Nahmeokee.	" 14.			Count Fitz- herbert in "The Married Rake," Mur- doch.
" 9.	Aladdin; not in the bill of "Othello," but Mrs. Rich- ardson and Mrs. Sharpe.				
" 10.	Goneril with Forrest.				

June 15.	Widow Melnotte.	Aug. 21.	Claude Melnotte; Eliza.
" 16.	Ellen, Count Fitzherbert.	" 22.	Zuliema.
" 18.	Christine.	" 23.	Hero, in "Woman's Wit," and Eliza.
" 19.	Eudiga, Patrick.	" 27.	Regular season). Isabella in "The Irish Ambassador," Power.
" 20.	"Rival Pages," and Zuliema.	" 30.	Isabella and "Rival Pages."
" 25.	"Rival Pages."	" 31.	Christine.
" 28.	Miss Cushman's Benefit. Claude Melnotte. Mrs. Richardson, Pauline; Richings, Beauseant; Placide, Col. Damas; and Constance, in "Love Chase."	Sept. 22.	"
		" 24.	Zuliema.
		" 28.	"Rival Pages."
" 30.	Betty, in "The Clandestine Marriage;" Cecilia, in "Rural Felicity."	Oct. 3.	Floribel, in "The Wife," J. R. Scott and Ellen Tree.
		" 9.	Helena, in "The Hunter of the Alps."
		" 12.	Constance, in "Woman's Wit."
		" 17.	Helen McGregor, J. R. Scott.
		" 27.	Constance, in "Love Chase;" Patrick.
		Nov. 5.	Eugenia, in "Free and Easy."
		" 6.	Eugenia.
		" 7.	"
		" 12.	"
" 13.	Eliza and Zuliema.	" 17.	Gossamer and Edwin Gadfly, in "The Twin Brothers."
" 16.	Eliza.		"
" 17.	Patrick.		"
" 18.	"	" 20.	"

The regular season closes after July 4.

Aug. 4. Claude Melnotte.

" 6. Patrick. (The Bedouin Arabs in the bill for some days.)

" 11. Eliza, in "Dumb Belle" and Patrick.

" 13. Eliza and Zuliema.

" 16. Eliza.

" 17. Patrick.

" 18. "

Nov. 22.	Gossamer and Edwin Gadfly, in "The Twin Brothers."	Brough as Col. Mannering; Placidas Dandie Dinmont; Richings as Dirk.
" 24.	" and Constance in "Love Chase."	Jan. 26. Ellen.
" 26.	Lady Percy in "Henry IV."	" 28. Paul.
" 28.	Hackett's Falstaff.	" 30. Miss Squeers in Nicholas Nickleby; Mrs. Richardson, Smike
" 30.	Cherubino.	" 31. "
Dec. 3.	Gossamer and Edwin Gadfly.	Feb. 2. "
" 7.	Lady Percy and Eudiga.	Blake was presenting a version of the same at the National.
" 10.	Mrs. Ford in "Merry Wives of Windsor," Hackett.	" 5. Tullia in "Brutus."
" 11.	"The Twin Brothers."	" 7. Nancy Sykes in "Oliver Twist" and Miss Squeers, Mrs. Richardson, Oliver; Placide, Bumble.
" 13.	Tullia, in Brutus."	" 8. Lady Macbeth; Hamblin.
" 18.	Eudiga.	" 9. Nancy Sykes; and Miss Squeers.
" 20.	Goneril, Mr. Wilson's Lear.	" 10. "
1839.	Eudiga.	" 12. "
Jan. 5.	Aladdin; Countess de Novara.	" 13. "
" 7.	Romeo; Portia; Shylock by "a young gentleman, first appearance."	" 14. "
" 15.	Aladdin.	" 15. "Lady of Lyons."
" 17.	Maria Grazie in "The Brigand."	" 16. Nancy and Miss Squeers.
" 23.	Paul.	
" 25.	Meg, in "Guy Mannering,"	

Feb. 19.	Miss Squeers.	Mar. 16.	Peter Wilkins.
" 21.	Mrs. Mortimer in "Laugh When You Can."	" 18.	Theodore in "Lafitte," and Miss Squeers.
" 23.	"	" 19.	"
" 25.	Ursula in "Rienzi;" Hamblin.	" 20.	Theodore in "Lafitte" and Nancy Sykes.
" 26.	"	" 22.	"
" 27.	Miss Squeers.	" 23.	Peter Wilkins.
March 2.	Ursula; and Margaret in "Tom Noddy's Secret."	" 25.	Saga in "Last Days of Pompeii," and Theodore.
" 4.	Emma in "William Tell" and Ursula; Hamblin.	" 26.	Peter Wilkins; Miss Squeers; and Theodore.
" 6.	Ursula and Miss Squeers.	" 27.	Saga; and Theodore.
" 7.	Margaret in "The King and the Freebooter."	" 28.	Peter Wilkins and Theodore.
" 8.	Ursula and Margaret.	" 29.	Saga and Theodore.
" 9.	"	" 30.	"
" 11.	Ursula and Peter Wilkins.	April 1.	Ursula.
" 12.	Nancy and Miss Squeers.	" 2.	Ellen; Mrs. Mizzlemix in "Mr. Greenfinch."
" 13.	Ursula; Peter Wilkins.	" 3.	Clorinda in "Robin Hood" and Mrs. Mizzlemix.
" 14.	Nancy Sykes and Miss Squeers.	" 4.	Ursula.
" 15.	Elvira in "Pizarro;" and Floranthe in "The Mountaineers;" Hamblin.	" 5.	Servia in "Virginus;" Hamblin.
		" 6.	Theodore.
		" 7.	Clorinda.
		" 9.	Peter Wilkins.
		" 10.	Mrs. Mizzlemix.
		" 12.	Ursula.

April 13.	Peter Wilkins.		Charles ; Rich-
" 15.	Ursula,		ings, Sir Benja-
" 17.	Saga.		min Backbite.
" 19.	Peter Wilkins.		" The public is
" 20.	} Saga.		respectfully in-
" 22.			formed that the
" 23.	Aladdin.		President of the
May 14.	Miss Squeers		United States
	and Tom Nod-		will honor the
	dy.		theatre with his
" 22.	Miss Squeers,		presence this
" 25.	Clorinda.		evening."
" 28.	Nancy Sykes and	July 8.	Julia in " The
	Miss Squeers.		Rivals."
" 29.	Clorinda.	" 9.	Julia in " The
" 30.	Nancy Sykes and		Rival Pages ; "
	Miss Squeers.		Peter Wilkins.
" 31	" Peculiar Posi-	" 10.	Nancy Sykes.
	tion."	" 11.	" Rival Pages."
June 1.	Mary in " Tom	" 15.	Grace Gaylove
	Noddy's Se-		in " The Re-
	cret."		view ; or the
" 8.	Montaldo in		Wags of Wind-
	" The Genoese"		sor."
" 14.	Miss Squeers.	" 16.	Claude Mel-
" 17.	Kitty in " Ways		notte ; " Second
	and Means."		appearance of
" 19.	Clorinda.		the young lady
" 24.	Mary, " Tom		who made so
	Noddy's Se-		successful an
	cret."		appearance on
" 25.	Nancy Sykes		the benefit
	and Miss		night of Miss
	Squeers.		Cushman ;
" 27.	Ellen.		Pauline, by the
July 2.	Queen Eliza-		Lady," Susan ;
	beth in " Rich-		" Zuliema."
	ard III."	" 17.	Miss Squeers.
" 3.	Eudiga.	" 23.	Elspy, the witch,
" 4.	Peter Wilkins.		in " Capt. Kyd ;
" 5.	Lady Teazle ;		or the Witch of
	Placide, Sir		Castle More ; "
	Peter ; Hield,		and Christine.

July 24.	Elspy, the witch in "Capt. Kyd; or the Witch of Castle More;" and Christine.	Oct. 3.	"Guy Manner- ing," Cushman or Meg not announced in the advertisement.
" 25.	"	" 5.	"
" 26.	Zuliema and "Abon Hasson"	" 10.	Rosamond in "Borrowed Feathers."
" 27.	Elspy, the witch, in "Capt. Kyd; or the Witch of Castle More;" and Christine.	" 11.	Rosamond in "Borrowed Feathers" and Helen in "Hunchback."
" 30.	"The Rival Pages."	" 14.	Emilia in "Othello;" Vandenhoff;" Susan Cushman as Desdemona for this night only.
Aug. 1.	Nancy Sykes.	" 19.	Julia in "The Rival Pages."
" 2.	Christine.	" 23.	"Pet of the Petticoats."
" 3.	Joan in "Maid of Orleans;" Zuliema.	" 26.	"
" 5.	"Rival Pages."	Nov. 18.	Emily Worthington in "The Poor Gentleman," played by Susan Cushman.
" 6.	Joan.	Dec. 6.	Mrs. Snaply in "The Dancing Barber."
" 7.	" ; Zuliema.	" 7.	"
" 8.	" ; Zuliema.	" 11.	"
" 9.	(Closed until Aug. 22.)	" 17.	Christine.
" 24.	Nancy Sykes.	1840.	
" 28.	Bianca in "Fazio."	Jan. 6.	Mary in "Tom Noddy's Secret;" Helen.
" 30.	"Tom Noddy's Secret."	" 11.	Volumnia in "Coriolonus."
Sept. 4.	Helen in "The Hunchback;" Miss Maywood's Julia.		
" 11.	Miss Squeers.		
" 27.	"Guy Manner- ing," Cushman or Meg not announced in the advertisement.		

Jan. 13.	Christine.				About Nothing."
" 14.	"Rival Pages" and Helena in "Hunter of the Alps."	Feb. 20.	"The Dancing Barber."		
" 17.	Empress in "Love;" the Vandenhoofs.	Mar. 5.	Helen Mac- Gregor.		
" 20.	"	" 7.	Nancy Sykes; Kate in "Tom and Jerry."		
" 22.	"	" 9.	Empress in "Love."		
" 28.	Isabella in "Revenge."	" 10.	Katherine to Creswick's Petruchio.		
" 29.	Mrs. Beverly in "The Game- ster;" Mr. Tasistro.	" 11.	Helen in "The Hunchback."		
" 30.	Emilia; Tasis- tro, Othello.	" 14.	Emilia in Oth- ello; Susan Cushman as Desdemona for the night only; Vandenhoff.		
" 31.	Lady Macbeth.	" 18.	Portia.		
Feb. 3.	Alithea in "The Country Girl."	" 21.	"Dancing Bar- ber."		
" 7.	"Pet of the Petticoats."	" 23.	Mary Stuart, with the Van- denhoofs.		
" 8, 10.	Mrs. Malfort in "Soldier's Daughter."	" 25.	Pauline; Cres- wick.		
" 13.	Alithea in "The Country Girl;" Mrs. Fitzwil- liams as Peggy.	" 26.	Kate in "Tom and Jerry;" Victorine in "Victorine;" and probably in cast of "Sam Weller."		
" 14.	Jeannie Deans in "Heart of Midlothian;" Mrs. Fitzwil- liams in her original char- acter, Madge Wildfire.	" 27.	Helen Mac- Gregor.		
" 15.	Lady Teazle; Nancy Sykes; her benefit.	" 30.	"		
" 19.	Beatrice in "Much Ado	Apr. 1.	"Dancing Bar- ber."		
		" 1.	Mary Stuart.		

Apr. 15.	Lady Percy in "Henry IV."		Tom and Jerry."
" 21.	Mrs. Snaply in "Dancing Barber."	May 14.	Eliza in "Dumb Belle;"
" 22.	Goneril; Chas. Kean; Susan Cushman, Cor- delia.	" 16.	Fanny Ellisler, "Dancing Bar- ber."
" 23.	Mrs. Page; Susan Cush- man, Mrs. Ford; Hackett, Falstaff.	" 19.	Mary Stuart.
" 24.	Queen in "Hamlet;" Susan Cush- man, Ophelia.	" 20.	Kitty in "Ways and Means."
" 28.	Pauline; Chas. Kean, Claude; "Abon Has- son."	" 23.	Katherine; Creswick, Pet- ruchio.
" 29.	Ophelia; and Eliza in "Dumb Belle."	" 27.	Kitty.
" 30.	Lady Macbeth; Kean.	" 30.	Helen Mac- Gregor; Kath- erine.
May 1.	Queen Eliza- beth in "Rich- ard III.;" Patrick.	June 1.	Eliza in "Dumb Belle,"
" 2.	Nancy Sykes.	" 2.	"Patrician and Parvenu."
" 7.	Lady Macbeth; Kean.	" 6.	"Dancing Bar- ber."
" 9.	Abon Hasson.	" 8.	Patrick.
" 11.	Nancy Sykes.	" 12.	Isabella in "Is- abella; or a Wo- man's Life."
" 13.	Pauline; Cres- wick; Bob in	" 13.	Isabella.
		" 18.	Alicia in "Jane Shore;" Kate Morton in "My Sister Kate."
		25.	Cecilia in "Ru- ral Felicity."
		Aug. 12.	"Married Rake."

Ireland remarks: "This lady's value to the establishment was not fully known until her absence made it painfully apparent." It may

be noted that on October 23, "Guy Manner-
ing" was given, but the performer of Meg is
not announced.

Miss Cushman had also appeared, here or
elsewhere, as Mrs. Lionel Lynx, in "Married
Life; Margaret, in "Margaret of Burgundy;"
Jack Horner, in "Greville Cross, or the Druid's
Stone;" Louise, in "Norman Leslie;" Al-
vedsen in "The Two Galley Slaves;" George
Fairman, in "The Liberty Tree, or Boston
Boys in 1773;" Lucy Clifton, in "The Fiend
of Eddystone;" Julia, in "The Hunchback;"
Zorilda, in "Timour, the Tartar;" Belvidera,
in "Venice Preserved;" Roxana, in "Alex-
ander, the Great;" Henry Germon, in "The
Hut of the Red Hunter," etc.; and had re-
peated her various characters much oftener
than can now be indicated with certainty.

The position of utility was the best that Miss
Cushman, or any other applicant, could have
expected at this time at the Park Theatre. The
composition of a stock company was governed,
not to speak of the matter of existing contracts
with the old players, largely by the established
rights of old actors, and only the retirement of
Mrs. Gurner made the vacancy. The posi-
tion, in Miss Cushman's case, as it came about

in the course of the engagement, was something better than that of a "maid of all work, although her début was accomplished on Saturday night, Aug, 26, of the opening week, in an after-piece, as *Patrick*, with song. The company consisted of Messrs. Mason, Clarke, Fredericks, Richings, Placide, Chippendale, Fisher, Jones, Isherwood, Wheatley, Coney, Nixon, Povey, Wells and Johnson, Master Henry Wells, Mrs. Richardson, Miss Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. Wheatley, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Chippendale, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Drurie, Mrs. Archer, Mrs. C. Pritchard, Miss Harriet Wells, Misses E. and J. Trumbull, and Kneass—a combination fitted for the whole range of dramatic work, with incidental singing and dancing. The special and star engagements were numerous, and Miss Cushman's opportunities for distinction and advancement came, to some extent, by way of accident, and mainly as the reward of patience, industry and readiness. The salary was small, twenty dollars a week, but from a list published in the Herald of 1840, Mrs. Wheatley, the leading actress, was paid the same. The Park Theatre had been the leading theatre of New York for nearly forty years; and it was in this season that it ex-

perienced its first serious opposition, in the National Theatre under the management of Mr. Wallack. The interior of the Park had been renovated very handsomely, and it is worthy of note, that its drop curtain represented the picture of the trial of Queen Katherine, with portraits of Mrs. Siddons, John and Charles Kemble, etc. The house enjoyed the highest class of patronage, and at the same time the democratic character of a material part of the audiences was very marked. Mrs. Trollope, in her book of travel, gives a very curious account of it in this particular.

We find little critical reference in the magazines and newspapers of the period to any of the actors. In fact, criticism, in the fulness and promptness of this day, was not yet born in America. The criticism exercised by the public was, perhaps, in consequence of this, of a more self-reliant character, and personal discussions of stage events, were, no doubt, more operative than at this time. Merit was recognized, actors had their partizans—but reputations were not exploited in public print. Charlotte Cushman shares with all others the semi-obscurity that rests on the rank and file. She had a standing of her own from the begin-

ning, for she played Goneril, with Forrest, in the first season, in a way that must have won consideration for her. She was, later, Forrest's mainstay, and on occasion, she was seen in such leading parts, as Constance, in the "Love Chase." January 25, 1839, she played Meg Merrilies, in "Guy Mannering," with Brough, and two weeks later, she made her strong impression, as Nancy Sykes. It may be observed from the schedule that "Guy Mannering" was not repeated immediately; the management failed to see that a new meaning had been added to the piece. "Oliver Twist" was a novelty and something of a sensation, and brought profit to the house, being frequently thereafter placed in the bill. Details of these and other performances will be found in appropriate chapters. Nancy Sykes brought our actress close to the people, and she was hailed as "Our Charlotte" long before the professional critics were ready to concede her superiority. The newspapers contain a line or two of commendation of Nancy Sykes, nothing of Meg. The latter character was developed in later years; the former was not played again by Miss Cushman for twenty years after she left the Park; but the performance is

commonly said to have established her in popular favor.

In the course of these three years she played with Kean, Ellen Tree, Forrest, Macready, the Woods, Madame Vestris, the Kembles, the Vandenhoffs, Hackett and others, and witnessed the best work that was afforded by the art and genius of the times—the best of schooling. Complaints were occasionally made that Simpson did not cast his people properly, and that some of the best of his actors were kept in the background—which we may appropriate as a trace of evidence in favor of Miss Cushman's recognition in advance of the management's willingness or power to put her forward. The difficulties of a manager are to be considered. Personally, Simpson seems to have been fully aware of her powers, as will be seen. Price and Simpson were introducing so many stars at this particular time that they impaired the interest of the public in the stock company. Foreign reputations dominated the stage. That men of discernment perceived Charlotte's genius, is shown by this extract from a letter of reminiscences by "An Englishman," and published in the *Boston Journal* in 1863, and which con-

firms the statement as to the indifference of the public :

"In one of my evening rambles about the city I found myself passing the Park Theatre, and I was moved to go in. There was little, I confess, in outward appearances, that was cheerful or exciting. The scenery was poor, tawdry, and inappropriate; the lights were dim, and the audience not large. The play was "Othello," and the whole performance was spiritless. In the part of Emilia I saw a large-sized, fair-complexioned young woman, not of handsome, but of impressive appearance. The effect of her denunciation of the Moor, after the murder of Desdemona, was electric. The few lines of high passion which the part contains, by the power with which the actress delivered them, made the part, insignificant though it is, the leading one on that occasion. By looking over the bill I found the name of this actress was Charlotte Cushman. She was rapturously applauded, and this was the only hearty applause that was given during the evening. I knew that there was no ordinary artist in this comparatively unknown young woman. I saw her next as Lady Macbeth, and my conviction was only the more confirmed by this terrible

test of any genius. I went away filled with admiration, resolved to see this powerful actress as often as I should have the opportunity. I then foresaw her fame, and time has justified my prophecy. I saw her frequently afterwards, when she played with Mr. Macready, and even with this great and cultivated artist she held her own. She had not had his experience, but she had genius. There were times when she more than rivalled him, when in truth she made him play second. I observed this in New York, and a critic in the *Times* bore witness to it in London. I have seen her throw such energy, physical and mental, into her performance as to weaken, for the time, the impression of Mr. Macready's acting. She profited, no doubt, by his admirable ability and veteran experience, but she nevertheless always preserved her own independence and thorough individuality."

To return to more personal history: Hamblin's offer was a salary of twenty-five dollars a week, exclusive, it may be assumed, of the usual benefits. The brave heart turns to the mother and children in Boston. Yes; mother must give up that horrid boarding-house which is wearing out her spirit, and which, probably,

she does not manage any better than Mrs. Gummidge could under similar circumstances. The Cushman family, she thinks, is out of its element in dishwater. "Come quick! I have a home for you. Leave Susan with sister; I have a position for brother; and little Augustus shall be with me—bless him." We need not dwell further on these domestic economies and arrangements, except to say that Charlotte was the breadwinner from that day forth. She puts that younger brother to school after a little, and he wrote her such loving letters in his boyish scrawl as made life thrill with well-earned joy. This sister god-mother finds a way to lay aside money enough to buy him a pony. Happy boy! Ah, well! if sister was good, he was, she always said, a genius; and she always held to the fancy, as long as she lived, that he was a wonderful lad; and when he died, thrown from his pony, she had his little jacket brought to her. So Joseph was loved, and she preserved it as a relic, carrying it with her everywhere. Think of that, if you should choose to fancy that this woman was, somehow, masculine in nature and unsexed in some of her work. The imposing personality of Charlotte Cushman in her later years, identified with certain tremendous

theatrical effects, is apt to overpower the conception of her in her young womanhood. She was always forceful, with the manner and feeling of authority, but she was comely, spirited, witty, merry, a many-sided person in those days. Stone, the historian of the Albany stage, remembers her at a social public ball: "In all the freshness and bloom of youth, magnificently attired, her head adorned with an immense and beautiful bird of paradise—as she threaded the mazes of the dance, or moved gracefully in the promenade, her stately form towering above her companions, she was the observed of all observers, the bright, particular star of the evening."

Miss Cushman had always a love of distinction and social power, and it served her for elevation of character; she instinctively knew that the highest art entitles its possessor to walk with the pure and noble. Vandenhoff covertly suggests that this was a weakness in Charlotte Cushman's character. Envy visited her sometimes by reason of it, that is all. Of course this history cares nothing for that collateral stock, and the family and social chronicles to which the actress attached so much value. The family to which she belongs is the family of genius,

the records of which are not set down in any book of descent. Away with your Marceys, your Lathrops and your Babbitts. But while Charlotte was at Albany, her relationship with United States Senator Marcey filled her parlors with visitors of distinction.

Her principal triumphs here were won in the Biancas, the Julias, the Juliets and the Julianas; she was also exceedingly popular in those caprices of attire that are afforded by the lighter operas and burlettas; and the pictures of her of this period show a face, that if it did not invite sonnets in its sad and thoughtful repose, could inspire to applause, and worship in its radiant emotions as Rosalind or some like daughter of the poet. There was abundant spiritual beauty. Susan had the conventional charm, Charlotte had the finer. This only in passing, for it would not be to the purpose to consider her personality in this particular, except in its relations to art. To that she soon turned with unswerving devotion.

But the life of Charlotte Cushman is something to be pondered by the young girl with aspirations for the stage. The writer attaches the utmost importance to this aspect of the case and feels a compensation for his labor in

the belief that the lessons of it will serve the good purpose of encouraging the gifted and restraining the incompetent. Ordinarily the success of a woman on the stage is dependent—although she rarely realizes it—on the training given to her, and the infinite care applied to her interests, by others experienced in art and business. Charlotte fought her own way alone. She also trained her sister Susan, and broke the way for her.

Susan Cushman was six years younger than her sister. She made her debut April 1837 in the "Genoese." It is not essential to give the details of her success on the stage; she was very pleasing as Ophelia, Desdemona, Grace Harkaway, and made something of a hit in "Satan in Paris." The energy of Charlotte when she took her in hand is all the more notable and praiseworthy by reason of the circumstances. When Susan was a mere girl a proposition was made by a friend of the family, then in the pinch of poverty, to care for her education. Mr Merriman was a merchant of middle life, a widower living in Boston and supposed to have an estate that made his proposition appear entirely disinterested. He became ill, and, as a requital of his

kindness, he made the unexpected request of marriage, avowing his love. Yielding to gratitude and the advice of those that were with her the young girl acceded, His plea had been that by this step he could provide for her, about to die, as he was. Mr. Merriman recovered; his bankruptcy was immediately declared; the marriage was unhappy in the extreme. The husband died before Susan went to England; but in the meanwhile it was the guardianship of Charlotte that prepared success for her on the stage.

Charlotte must have impressed all those points that were referred to in the opening chapter of this book on the mind of her sister Susan. If the facts could be arrived at, our love belongs to Charlotte for the infinite care that she gave to the training of her beautiful younger sister, for the sage advice, for the shielding arm — to be admired of all lovers of virtue — all for her until she stood sponsor for her at the altar where she was made a good man's wife in England.

There was a certain stern resoluteness in the character of Charlotte Cushman which was strengthened by the circumstances of struggle

for recognition, gaining in the meanwhile a meagre support.

She was like any of us to whom life is real and not merely illusion and vanity. When she was attacked she resented it as a practical man would whose honor, dignity, and livelihood concern his family as well as himself. Thus when the editor of the *New World* endeavored to thrust her sister Susan from her place in favor of a protégé, and opened fire on her, her soul was up in arms. Miss Clarendon was praised in "London Assurance," but Charlotte as Lady Gay Spanker, was described as having "a vast deal of animal spirits, but nothing of the lady" and showing "a want of education and good breeding." On Saturday night, October 16, the *New World* describes a disturbance at the theatre: "Aided by several editors and hangers-on of the press, who, accompanied by some select friends, with thick sticks, heavy boots, and obstreperous voices, succeeded in raising for the old actress a tremendous reception, but completely failed in their endeavor to hiss down the novice." The truth is that Charlotte had been cast into the amphitheatre and that she vanquished the lions, did our Charlotte.

A little later, in writing of Knowles' play "Old Maids," the acknowledgement was made that "Lady Blanche, exhibited some of the lady-like deportment" that was lacking in Lady Gay Spanker; and that she was "handsomely dressed." Charlotte Cushman's fame does not need to take any account of the hostility that was cherished against her in certain quarters, except that it is material to state that she continued to have a certain half-concealed opposition throughout her career. She got no welcome from certain editors on her triumphal return from England in 1849—silence. A few months before her arrival, had occurred the unfortunate Astor Place Riot in the Forrest-Macready rivalry, and no doubt she was classed with her friend Macready. Americanism was rampant at that day, and later on her residence abroad was taken account of by provincialism. Of course, these are mere passing incidents.

How many a battle she made for Susan! Soon after the incident referred to she left the Park Theatre, and went to Philadelphia to join Burton. She had only been able to procure the meagre salary of twelve dollars a week for Susan, and the house was often in financial difficulties about this time. Poor dear old Simpson proba-

bly could do no better, but he should have known better than to have listened to the suggestions of one of Charlotte's enemies about taking away from Susan her best parts in favor of a journalist's protégé. The threats of an editorial goose quill had no terrors for this brave woman. Nor was she to be "driven from the stage." She was simply radiant with the glow of the conflict.

She had secured the aid of James Gordon Bennett, and that explained some strong words in the Herald and the presence of her friends on the occasion that has been described. "Look, look! here comes Lady Gay Spanker across the lawn at a handgallop" announced her entrance, and a shout of welcome put an end to the effort at "teaching her a lesson." Mr. A. C. Wheeler somewhere tells of Hackett's remarking of her at this period: "There is a woman who will be great in spite of all her failings and in spite of the world, because there is nobody strong enough to question her right, after she has made up her mind."

Again at this point we may get a glimpse of the extraordinary variety of the actress's restless work. The first time that Forney saw her

was in the summer of 1840 with a company that had dropped in on a little town in Pennsylvania! We may put aside the details of her work at Burton's Theatre in Philadelphia. Burton finally produced a spectacular piece, "The Naiad Queen," which became very popular, as one of the first of its kind, the action employing female warriors, with a display of person in glittering armour. The female biographers do not seem to regard this event as of importance in Miss Cushman's career, but it is of exceeding interest. "No captain," says Wemyss, "of a company (and very few in the regular army) ever carried his company through all their military evolutions with greater precision than Miss Cushman commanded her female guard on this occasion. Half the attraction of the piece, so well produced in all its departments, was indebted to these scenes." It was brought April 13, 1841, to the National Theatre in New York. It was from this extraordinary diversion of her genius that Charlotte Cushman was called to the leading position at the Park. She came into her rights. It is curious, to note that this turn in her career came about by the burning of the National Theater and the consequent disarrangement of Burton's plans.

The following list gives the sequence of her work at the Park Theater at the time: 1841, August 30. "Midsummer Night's Dream," Oberon;—not yet her true function, but the play was done for some time; September 6, "The Poor Gentleman," Emily Worthington; 11, "The Beaux Strategem," Mrs. Sullen; Susan, Dorinda—and the sister played a number of good parts thereafter; 28, Mrs. Maeder's benefit, "Town and Country," the Hon. Mrs. Glenroy; October 11, "London Assurance," first time in America, Lady Gay Spanker; November 9, "Walder the Avenger," Agnes; 17, "London Assurance;" 1842, Jan. 5, "What will the World Say?" Marian Mayley; 17, "Suspicious Husband," Clorinda, for a week; April 7, "West End, or the Irish Heiress," Lady Darnley.

Dissatisfied with the salary, or more probably with the irregular payment of it—for the Park had many weeks of serious depression in business—Miss Cushman, in 1842, became the leading actress and stage-manager at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, E. A. Marshall lessee. Her stay in Philadelphia confirmed her popularity, and she made constant progress, upholding her sister all the while.

Vandenhoff played with her there, and says : "She was by no means then the actress which she afterwards became. She displayed at that day, a rude, strong, uncultivated talent ; it was not until she had seen and acted with Mr. Macready—which she did the next season—that she really brought artistic study and finish to her performances. At this time she was frequently careless in the text, and negligent of rehearsals. I played Rolla with her, and she was, even then, the best Elvira I ever saw. The power of her scorn, and the terrible earnestness of her revenge, were immense."

John Brougham records a pleasant reminiscence of her from this period : "She was the directress of that house then, and quite young, with a fine spice of fun in her composition." He tells of her ringing down the curtain on him according to some custom of the theatre, and merrily laughing at him from the wings.

The significance of her stay in Philadelphia is that Burton, Marshall, and the managers, had "discovered" her. Here was great power and versatility not yet untrammelled. She was greatly missed at the Park ; and Vandenhoff tells of Simpson's frank admission that he had no one in his company, Charlotte being absent,

who could play with him certain leading characters. The turning point in Miss Cushman's career was her engagement to support Macready. A singular proof of her energy is that for a time she played alternate nights in Philadelphia and New York, thus filling her tremendous task with half her efforts. Mrs. Sloman was the leading woman at the Park at the beginning of Macready's engagement. In Macready's diary, under the date of Oct. 23, occurs this passage: "Acted Macbeth equal, if not superior to any performance I have ever given of the character. I should say it was a noble piece of art. The Miss Cushman who acted Lady Macbeth interested me much. She has to learn her art, but she showed intelligence and sympathy with me—a novelty so refreshing to me on the stage." Imagine the power required to impress a man who is frank enough to describe his own work as "a noble piece of art." She acted with him, December 6, 1843, Evadne in "The Bridal"; 8, Beatrice; 15, Angiolina in "Marino Faliero"; &c. The diary, May 8, 1844, has this note: "Wrote to Miss Charlotte Cushman, as I had promised Simpson, wishing her to play here during my engagement." She continued to

play with him on tour, and closed with him at Boston, October, 1844, where in the audience were such noted men as Webster, Story, and Longfellow. Macready had told her to "come to England, where your talents will be appreciated at their true value," and she took him at his word. Intending to make the venture at once she sought a benefit in Boston, and also solicited financial encouragement in her plans in a benefit at the Park Theatre, Vandenhoff playing Benedick to her Beatrice. In each case the house was poor, and Vandenhoff records that her performance was affected by her over-anxiety.

CHAPTER III.

THE SUDDEN BURST OF FAME : TRIUMPH IN ENGLAND ; AND LIFE ABROAD.

OCTOBER 6, 1844, with a meagre sum of money—the amount of her savings being indicated by Mr. G. T. Ferris, in an article, as \$600—Charlotte Cushman sailed for England in the packet Garrick, fitly named ; the principal line at that time having dramatic names. The margin of money was narrow indeed, for she had left a part of her savings at home. She was attended by her colored maid Sally, a faithful and life-long servitor. To all who are familiar with the devotedness of the old type of colored servant, there is a picturesque pathos in the days of uncertain waiting in the humble lodgings in London. Sally became invaluable ; she knew the wardrobes, and was familiar with the lines of all the plays, so as on occasion to be able to prompt her mistress ; she learned to

apply that fearful visage of Meg Merrilies, a task that occupied no little time ; she was also fond of reading, and altogether was a model maid. Miss Cushman reckoned on six months for her venture ; and her emotions were mixed with apprehension and hope. She was armed with seventy letters of introduction, and as she wrote to her mother, "expected to make some friends." She arrived in Liverpool November 8th. She was not seeking employment, but proposed to stand on her own rights. She had a campaign on hand, and managed it with singular and characteristic discretion. It is evident that Macready was anxious for some kind of an arrangement with her for a series of performances at least, that he was about to give in Paris. In his diary, Nov. 9, he mentions "the danger of announcing the English performance at Paris before Miss Cushman's and Mr. Ryder's arrival." He wrote and had inquiry made as to her arrival in Liverpool ; and she ran over for ten days, from her lodgings in Covent Garden, London, to Paris, to look into the matter. There seems to have been some disagreement with Miss Faucit, the leading actress in England, and Macready's management about this time. Whether or not Macready pre-

ferred Miss Cushman to Miss Faucit for this important engagement, the entry in the diary shows that he had her in mind. Miss Cushman determined finally, after consulting her old friend Barton, then living in England, not to become involved in any of the possible complications. She returned to England.

It was only a combination of circumstances that brought the chance for which she had crossed the seas. It is not at all improbable that Forrest himself gave the decisive urging that finally induced Maddox to engage the actress, without which engagement she might have returned home. Be that as it may, the consideration was her own by right. Forrest wished to play in Paris, and Alger, in his biography, relates that Macready's manager, Mitchell, refused to see him in Paris on the business. The quarrel was then brewing between the two men.

There is an apparent discrepancy in the accounts given of the relations of Miss Cushman with Maddox, the manager of the Princess's Theatre in London. It is probable that she held out for her own terms, and came to her last penny in waiting for a favorable reply from Maddox. The manager was seen one

morning by her maid from the window pacing the street near the lodgings. "He is anxious," said Miss Cushman, "I can make my own terms." Vandenhoff gives a different version. He says: "On her first introduction to him, Miss Cushman's gifts did not strike him as exactly those which go to make up a stage heroine, and he declined engaging her. Charlotte had no great pretensions to beauty, but she had perseverance and energy, and knew that there was the right metal in her; so she went to Paris, with the view of finding an engagement there with an English company. She failed, too, in that, and returned to England, more resolutely than ever bent on finding employment there, because it was now more than ever necessary to her. It was a matter of life and death, almost. She armed herself, therefore, with letters (so Maddox told me) from persons who were likely to have weight with him, and again presented herself at the Princess's, but the little Hebrew was as obdurate as Shylock, and still declined her proffered services. Repulsed, but not conquered, she rose to depart; but as she reached the door, she turned and exclaimed: 'I know that I have enemies in this country; but (and here she cast herself on her knees, raising her clenched hand

aloft) so help me—I'll defeat them.' She uttered this with the energy of Lady Macbeth, and the prophetic spirit of Meg Merrilies. 'Hello!' said Maddox to himself, 's' help me; she's got de stuff in her,' and he gave her an appearance, and afterwards an engagement in his theatre."

It is clear that Maddox was proceeding with deliberation; he had been doing romantic plays at his theatre, so that the turn to tragedy created comment, it being a change of policy for the season.

The truth appears to be that Maddox, having in hand an engagement of Forrest, who was known to the public from a previous visit, had the business sagacity to see profit in bringing forward together the two Americans. Her extraordinary merits were fully vouched for by Barton, and by Macready, with whom she had acted in America, and by others of the profession. Maddox yielded to her plans to the extent of giving her a preliminary trial on her own account, but it was a narrow margin, and set apart the evening of February 14, 1845, for her début; the following evening was also her own, but she was then added to the Forrest bill, until, in the course of a week or two, she

seems to have driven the tragedian to the wall. Whether Forrest's engagement was cut short or not, there is no means of knowing; but there is every evidence that her success overshadowed Forrest and was distasteful to him. They were never friends afterwards. The newspapers criticized him, with recognition, but with dashes of savagery. They proclaimed Miss Cushman transcendant. She and Forrest were both called before the curtain, but the papers commented on his alternations of whispered speech and bursts of unstinted voice. He imagined that there was a conspiracy in Miss Cushman's favor, and against him, but evidently the chief conspirator was the Puritan daughter's good genius.

There was, so this writer is convinced, a kind of conspiracy, not formal but by tacit agreement, among the friends of Macready against the American tragedian. Miss Cushman's success was a windfall for them, wholly unexpected. There was no social intimacy between Macready and Charlotte Cushman apparently, professional recognition was about the limit of his kindness to her.

Miss Cushman made her *début* as Bianca in "Fazio." Later on, in considering the

actress's characters, we shall see what was thought by the critics of this performance. The audience stood upon the benches and gave full-throated welcome to the newcomer when her powers became apparent. She began at seven pounds a night for a limited engagement, and higher terms and time limited only to the public demand, were at once agreed upon. Engagements in other cities had to be cancelled. Her rooms were filled with a stream of callers, people great in the world of society, of art, and of letters. Painters besought her to let them put her on canvas; Talfourd was ablaze with enthusiasm, and set about writing a play for her, and in a speech in court made an incidental proclamation of her greatness. The poet Rogers, whose real poetry was mainly in ingots and strong boxes, gave her charming breakfasts with charming people. Eliza Cook fell in love with her, and read her own poetry to her, some of the sonnets being on Charlotte—and they spent much time then, and in after years, in the company of each other. Gold sovereigns were pouring in, too; and Charlotte is moved, in writing to her mother, to exclaim that with five years of this prosperity, and fifty thousand dollars at the end

of it, she and her mother, and others of the family, could retire to some quiet spot of a home and live happy ever after. Of course, mother and Susan must come over as soon as arrangements can be made. A cottage at Bayswater, near London, was engaged. Her success grows, and is sustained beyond expectation or hope.

The record of Miss Cushman's work in London may here be given in its order: February 13 and 15, "Fazio"; 17 and 19, Emilia, with Forrest as Othello; 21, Lady Macbeth with Forrest; 22, "Fazio"; 24, 26, "Macbeth"; 27, Rosalind, Henry Wallack as Jaques; 28, "Macbeth"; March 1, Rosalind; 3, "Macbeth"; 4, Mrs. Haller; 6, Forrest played Lear, but Miss Cushman was not in the cast; 7, Rosalind; 13, Mrs. Haller; 15, Rosalind. The theatre seems to have been closed for a week, with reference to the church calendar; 24, Mrs. Haller; 25, Rosalind; 27, Mrs. Haller; her appearances with Forrest were fewer than those on her own account, and, in the meanwhile, "Metamora" had been pronounced rubbish; 29, "Fazio"; April 1, Rosalind; 3, Beatrice; 8, Mrs. Haller; 9, Beatrice; 11, Rosalind; 12, 15, Mrs. Haller;

17, Beatrice; 19, 21, Julia in "The Hunchback;" 22, Mrs. Haller; 24, Julia; 28, Julia; 29, Mrs. Haller; May 1, 3, 5, "Infatuation," written for Miss Cushman, was tried, and failed. 7, "Macbeth," with Wallack, Forrest having retired; 8, Julia; 10, Mrs. Haller; 12, "Macbeth;" 13, Rosalind; 15, Julia; 17, Mrs. Haller; 19, "Macbeth;" 21, Julia in the "Honeymoon;" 24, Mrs. Haller; 26, "Macbeth;" 27, Julia; 29, "Honeymoon;" 30, Rosalind; June 2, Mrs. Haller; 5, Beatrice; 7, Julia; 9, Portia; 10, for the first time, Meg Merrilies, which was repeated June 13 and 14, and a benefit, but was reserved for a later period as a feature; 11, Portia; 12, "Honeymoon;" 16, "Macbeth;" 17, "The Wife" and Meg; 19, "The Wife;" 21, Lady Teazle; 23, Mrs. Haller; 24, 26, "The Wife;" 27, Meg; 28, 30, "The Wife;" July 1, Mrs. Haller; 3, Rosalind; 6, 7, "The Wife;" Mrs. Haller; 9, Meg; 11, "The Wife;" 14, Julia; 15, Mrs. Haller. A professional tour was then made of the provinces—Brighton, Bath, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, etc.

Charlotte now took in hand her plan of bringing out Susan as Juliet to her Romeo. She made a special re-study of the play, both

with reference to her sister's performance and a production in a more elaborate form, in every way, than she had ever seen given to it. Susan had played the part before with Charlotte. The general idea of it was certainly not new to them, but its execution in England, as it turned out, was a brilliant inspiration. They gave it a trial in Southampton, and appeared at the Haymarket, December 30, 1845. The performance created the greatest kind of a sensation. All the world loved this lover. No other Romeo has had such words of praise. The reader will reach them in these pages after a little. I find twenty-seven consecutive announcements of it broken by "Ion," February 13, 18, 21 and 24, Charlotte as Ion, Susan as Clemanthe. "Romeo and Juliet" had many other performances, and was given more than two hundred times in the provinces. Charlotte was well on the road toward the fifty thousand dollars that she had dreamed of by letter to her mother. The sisters played six weeks in Dublin, where Charlotte was also seen as Viola in "Twelfth Night."

The succeeding months of the year 1846, and the greater part of 1847, and a part of 1848 were devoted to the provinces—including the

cities of Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Hull, Newcastle, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cork, Dundee, Perth, Liverpool, etc.

An occasion of importance was the farewell benefit, before his departure for America, of Macready, which was given at Drury Lane, July 10, 1848, under every demonstration of royal and public recognition. The play was "Henry the Eighth," and Charlotte was the Queen Katherine. She had also played with him on two or three other occasions.

In August 1849, Miss Cushman returned to America to receive the congratulations of her own public. In 1852 she was again in England, where she played in the provinces for a while and then rested.

Following her footsteps in the London newspapers, this transcript is afforded :

1854, Jan. 27, at the Haymarket, "Fazio"; 30, Mrs. Haller; Feb. 1, "Fazio;" 3, Mrs. Haller; 6, "Guy Mannering;" Meg Merrilies having now received its full development, the performance was in the bill for seventeen nights; March 12, "The Dutchess Elinor," written for her, proved a failure, and was withdrawn after a few nights; 17, Mrs. Haller; 20, 22, "Fazio"; 24, Mrs. Haller; 27, 29,

Meg Merrilies; 31 and April 3, "King Henry the Eighth"; 5, 7, Meg Merrilies. In May "The Actress of Padua" ran for something more than a week; 25, 28, "Guy Mannering," Sims Reeves as Col. Mannering. Later in the year, in the early weeks of November, "Guy Mannering" was a renewed attraction at the Haymarket; 17, 19, Mrs. Haller; 20, 22, "The Provoked Husband," Lady Townly; 21, Meg; 23, Romeo, with Miss Swansborough as Juliet; 24, Meg; 26, Mrs. Haller; 27, and for several nights, Meg Merrilies. In January, 1856, Miss Cushman was again at the Haymarket, first playing Miss Hardcastle in "She Stoops to Conquer."

The record gives the substance of her triumphal career in England.

Let us turn to the private life, enjoyments, and domestic affairs of the woman now clothed in the brightness of fame. Her homeward thoughts, for many years, were to be with those that dwelt in England. Here mother and sister were to die; and some years in Rome as an abiding place, were to be the summing up of affairs for her apart from the stage.

As a diversion of her mind and as a recrea-

tion from her labors, Miss Cushman was fond of travel, but an itinerary of her pleasure trips would not be of the slightest value in a study of her stage career. A slight reference will be sufficient. She made a short tour when she first reached England. The Isle of Wight afforded her pleasure. She frequently visited Malvern, a watering place; and usually had some female companion to share with her the delights of rest and change of scene; and, incidental to her visits to Rome, she saw what intermediate travel could afford. She visited Rosa Bonheur; was an ardent admirer of George Sand, but did not meet her, imagining that she had nothing to offer her. Among her early friends was Mr. J. Muspratt, of Seaforth Hall, near Liverpool, whose son, J. Sheridan Muspratt, married Susan Cushman, in March, 1848, and led her to the retirement of an elegant home. Charlotte Cushman spent many happy days there. As the guest of the Duke of Manchester, in 1848, she was made specially welcome, and her entertainers and a group of friends repaid with rapturous applause, on one occasion, her recitation of "Lord Ullin's Daughter." In 1854 she dined with the Duke of Manchester, and, incident to her re-

ception, read scenes from "Henry the Eighth." In the meanwhile she maintained a home in Bolton Row, where her entertainments were of a notable character. A dinner to Ristori is recorded. Miss Cushman's friends were select. She knew and visited Jane Welsh Carlyle, whom she describes as a marvellous raconteur. Miss Jewsbury was an intimate, and corresponded with her faithfully. The friendship of Eliza Cook and others has been noted.

In 1852 Miss Cushman first visited Rome, accompanied by Harriet Hosmer and Grace Greenwood; she sat to Page for a portrait; travelled; became acquainted with the Brownings in Florence; and wintered in Rome in 1856-57. In 1859 she established a home there, which she retained until 1874, although she was frequently absent. Miss Stebbins executed a bust of her. Among her constant visitors were Lord Houghton, Lathrop, Motley, Bayard Taylor, Theodore Parkman, etc. The society that sought her was of the highest, and included great names.

Miss Cushman was fitted for circles where intellectuality and all the graces make life brilliant and profitable. She was heard in songs; her aspirations were noble, and her

conversation sparkled with wit; she was entertaining in reminiscence, telling a droll story well, and, all in all, could and did contribute in full measure to the enjoyment of every assemblage in which she happened to be. Miss Stebbins gives the particulars of these days in Italy. To enlarge the picture of Miss Cushman beyond the semblance of her real, public self—that which is the singular possession of the stage and its lovers—would be beyond the purpose of this record. Susan Cushman died in May, 1859, having lost one child, Ida, in 1854. Miss Cushman's mother died in 1866. Charlotte's family affections were strong, and as those nearest to her passed away she bestowed her heart on her surviving nephews and nieces, and was true to the attachments formed for her numerous friends. Thus while her life was not desolate, it lacked completeness except in art—there the history is perfect and was maintained to the end; and, it may be said in this relation, once for all, that adverse comment on her several farewells to the stage and subsequent returns, is misplaced. It was well that her spirit glowed in the service of the stage to the last.

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[illegible]

Rosalind, Queen Katherine in "Henry the Eighth," Meg Merrilies, Julia in the "Hunchback," Beatrice, Lady Macbeth, and Mrs. Simpson.

After a tour of the country she returned to July to England for a few weeks. Altogether she crossed the ocean sixteen times. Miss Cushman had acquired a fortune, and that she seriously wished to retire after she had again played in the States from the fall of 1850 until 1852 can not be questioned. The fact that she gave farewell performances at the old Broadway, Brougham's Lyceum, and the Astor Place Opera house, and that, from time to time in the years afterwards she was announced as filling her final engagements, do not affect her sincerity. The performances at the Broadway in May included Agnes, in "The Banker's Wife," Juliana in "The Honeymoon," Meg Merrilies, Lady Gay Spanker, Mary in "All that Glitters is not Gold," Mrs. Haller, La Thisbe in "The Actress of Padua," Romeo with Mrs. Bowers as Juliet, Mrs. Simpson in "Simpson and Company," and Rosalind.

Something more than four years later the demand for her reappearance was so great—her spirit of unrest and devotion to her art be-

ing responsive—Miss Cushman returned to the stage, and if there were a few who resented this prompting of her heart, the public was rewarded in seeing her in new manifestations of her genius. The country had a full welcome for her, and she played a number of memorable engagements in New York. June 28, 1858, there was a notable cast of "London Assurance" provided for her Lady Gay Spanker. Meg Merrilies was recognized as a wonderful creation and theatre goers were not willing to relinquish the possession of this perfect work of art. July 1, 1858, with E. L. Davenport specially engaged for her support, Miss Cushman began an engagement at Niblo's Garden. The first character was Meg Merrilies. "The School for Scandal" was produced July 3, with this great cast :

Lady Teazle, . . . Miss Cushman.

Sir Peter Teazle, . . . Placide.

Sir Oliver, . . . Gilbert.

Charles, Davenport.

Sir Benjamin Backbite, Brougham.

Crabtree, Blake.

She then played Queen Katherine ; Rome with Miss Mary Devlin, afterwards the wife

Edwin Booth, as Juliet; Lady Macbeth and Juliana.

Later in the season, after a visit abroad, she appeared at Burton's Theatre, Broadway, September 28, 1858, as Bianca in "Fazio." Burton had been a stanch friend and admirer of the actress, and he sustained her at this time with all the resources of his able management. In the "School for Scandal" he appeared as Sir Oliver; for her Romeo he provided Susan Denin; and contributed his own rare performance of Touchstone to "As You Like it." He made a special production of "Guy Mannering," and advertised Miss Cushman's performance with much acclaim, describing it with: "Its terrible grandeur has never been surpassed on any stage." Mrs. Haller, Juliana, La Thisbe, and Mrs. Simpson, were in the list of characters. People were turned away from the doors unable to gain admission to the theatre.

Miss Cushman had established a home in Italy, and for about two years found the compensations of a life of agreeable companionships and well planned employment of an undisturbed life. It must be the sad surmise of any one observant of the career of the great actress that

her extraordinary return to the stage was largely conditioned by her unsatisfied sense of power and was slipping away and the near future and that employment beyond the gates lay ahead her by her genius. Domestic life had been narrow and all her wealth could not have slaved the hand that death lay near to home. No generous heart can for a moment see in her return to the stage anything that is not a demonstration of character. It must be so considered that the toil of her early career, which in large part made her success possible, which has been with despair and with failure in this book, made the love of work a part of her nature. This is not a new human experience; and when we reflect that this toil was a part of a young woman's self-imposed task of maintaining those that were dear to her and who had passed out of her life, leaving her in solitude to enjoy the reward of her labor, we can understand the matter, which should not be vexed with idle conjecture as to a lack of faith with the public in not departing from the stage.

After an interval of some years, Charlotte Cushman came back to her own land, where she was cheered by these great audiences,

whose friendship in such measure supplied a lack in her life. The opening performance at the Winter Garden, October 1, 1860, was "The Stranger"; and then followed on various nights, Bianca; Meg,—the advertisement, for a week, stating that "last night nearly 2,000 people were turned away"; Queen Katherine; Mrs. Simpson; Lady Macbeth; Cardinal Wolsey; Romeo, with Mrs. D. P. Bowers as Juliet; Juliana, and Beatrice. This selection of characters, and this extraordinary rush of the public to witness their performance afforded perhaps the most brilliant engagement that Charlotte Cushman enjoyed. She was now used to the full light of fame, and the experience, no doubt, was in the nature of consolation rather in the feeling of triumph and elation that belonged to the first burst of recognition in London.

It was on her return to the Winter Garden, beginning February 26, that "Oliver Twist" was announced for performance in these terms: "Miss Cushman has consented to appear in the character of Nancy Sykes, a part, which, though she has not appeared in it since the days of the old Park, still holds an abiding place in the memory of all lovers of the drama

in New York for its unsurpassed force and dramatic power." In the cast were J. W. Wallack, Jr., as Fagin; J. B. Studley, excellent in Bill Sykes; Mr. Davidge as Bumble; Mr. S. D. Johnson in his original character, the Artful Dodger, Mrs. J. G. Stoddart as Oliver Twist, etc. The play was repeated March 1, 2, 7; "Katherine and Petruchio" was given March 9, with Juliana; Meg was the character March 4, 5, 6; for her benefit March 8, Lady Teazle. After this time she played Nancy occasionally. In point of fact the character was an achievement of her youth, and as she remarked to Mr. Studley, she "had forgotten what she had done in the part to create such a lasting impression." She had outgrown it in the matter of years, but although the play had been the mainstay of some very clever actresses, notably Matilda Heron, her return to it was not to her disadvantage by way of comparison.

The war disturbed Charlotte with patriotic solicitude. She was intimate with the Seward family, and while absent from the country kept up a correspondence that indicates her unceasing interest in the result of the conflict. In 1863 she gave a series of performances in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, which netted for the

Sanitary Fund \$8,267.29. To the Dramatic Fund she had contributed her services in New York, March, 1861, at the Academy of Music, in a performance of "Macbeth," with Edwin Booth. The receipts on this occasion were \$3,100.

After the close of the war Miss Cushman had a long period of rest, living abroad, and ten years elapsed before she was again seen on the boards. September 25, 1871, she began an engagement at Booth's Theatre, where in forty-two nights the receipts were \$67,000. *Meg Merrilies*, *Queen Katharine*, and *Lady Macbeth* were the features. She now undertook some travel, and that her vitality was ebbing away under a physical affliction appeared in her breaking down in New Orleans, whither she had gone at the solicitation of Lawrence Barrett. She returned East, and after this, her struggle with her malady was ominous and continuous. Her engagement at Booth's Theatre, beginning October 19, proved to be her last. There, under contract with Mr. H. C. Jarrett, she played under conditions that gave great dignity to the productions of "Henry the Eighth," "Guy Mannering," and "Macbeth." The support was notable, and on occasion the

incidental music was given to its fullest capacity by enlarged choruses. The farewell night is described in another chapter.

CHAPTER V.

MEG MERRILIES.

THE accounts in the biographies are curiously astray as to Charlotte Cushman's first appearance as Meg Merrilies. A newspaper clipping that had a certain vogue, and which is quoted by Miss Stebbins, says that Mrs. Chippendale, at the Park Theatre, cast for the part, was suddenly taken ill; "so this obscure utility actress, this Miss Cushman, was sent for and told to be ready in the part by night. She might read it on the boards if she could not commit it; but the utility woman was not used to reading her parts; she learned it before night fall, and played it after night fall. She played it so as to be enthusiastically applauded, etc." Miss Stebbins says: "It *was* in consequence of Mrs. Chippendale's illness, that she was called upon the very day of the performance to assume the part. Study, dress, etc., had to be the inspiration of the moment. She had never especially noticed the part; as it had been heretofore performed there was not

Charlotte Cushman, as she probably also played with Braham on another occasion. The advertisements in both the morning and evening papers of that date, announce Charlotte as Meg; and that she was not entirely unfamiliar with the part is clear. She had played it at the National twice. The fable, however, is in the main correct. There can be no doubt that she conceived certain views of the character as by inspiration of the moment, as she stood in the wings. One writer quotes her as having reflected: "If Bertram, the nursling of the old gypsy, is now a grown man, surely Meg will not be the hale, erect woman they all make her out to be. I must put more truth into my Meg." Whether it was Brough or Braham that said to her that, "Had you done to-night's work on a London stage, your fortune would be made," is immaterial. Although her performance of the part was not then developed, its novelty must have made it sufficiently startling. So forcible was she in it, in later years, that the effect in repetition was hardly diminished on the actors that played with her. Mr. Frederick Warde says that when he, in his first experience with her, turned, as the business of the play requires, he, for the moment, lost his self-

possession in beholding this real apparition.

A reference to the schedule in Chapter Second will set at rest the uncertainties as to dates and the facts. It will be remembered, also, that her second appearance on the stage in 1836 was as Lucy Bertram. She was entirely familiar with the part. The fact of her playing it at the National in 1837 indicates that she had already grasped the possibilities of the character; and it is very probable that she had played it in New Orleans or Albany, as she must have selected roles from her repertory for her experiment in New York. It was Brough, and not Braham, who appeared on this occasion, and it was his benefit night. The play was not repeated—had no run. While her performance doubtless left a certain impression, it received very little public comment. That the incident with Brough or Braham occurred there can be no reason to doubt. The Meg Merrilies of Charlotte Cushman's later years was the development of her genius, and played under other conditions. When she had full command of her own stage she changed the business very materially, for she was an uncommonly good stage manager, and the death

scene, in particular, was something entirely different from that early performance.

It is thought best in this relation to give the reader the material out of which Miss Cushman wrought her touching and thrilling effects.

"Guy Mannering" was dramatized by Daniel Terry, an actor at Covent Garden Theatre, and a person of consideration enough to be among the intimate friends of Sir Walter Scott. He was, at all events, one of the twenty who kept the secret of Scott's identity as the author of the Waverly novels. At the time of the dramatization and production of the piece, in the spring of 1816—the year, it may be noted, in which Charlotte Cushman was born—the great Scotch writer had not yet come into his fame as a novelist. It was only in 1827 that the mystery surrounding the wizard of the North was cleared.

In the dramatized version of the novel the first scene represents the inn of Mrs. McCandlish. It appears that Gilbert Glossin, the lawyer, has managed to get the better of Sir Godfrey Bertram in the management of the estate, and that after his death he has purchased Ellangowan Castle, from which he is about to turn Lucy Bertram. The young girl,



presumably the sole heir, has arranged to meet her servants at the inn, pay them and dismiss them. Dandie Dinmont, a roystering countryman, "fighting Dinmont of Liddesdale," is looked for at the inn on his way to the fair. In the conversation between Mrs. McCandlish, Bailie Micklethrift and Col. Mannering, who has just arrived as the purchaser of the estate adjoining that of his old friend, Sir Godfrey, it is brought out that sixteen years before this date young Henry Bertram, a lad of five years, had vanished, either having been abducted or murdered. The lad had disappeared while in charge of his tutor, Abel Sampson. It was believed that Meg Merrilies, an old gypsy, had some hand in it, being moved to revenge for the transportation of her son for poaching. The husband of Mrs. McCandlish was found murdered as a part of the villainy. Col. Mannering offers a refuge to Lucy Bertram, and in his sister provides her with a companion. In a touching scene Dominic Sampson refuses to leave the service of his old master's daughter. Lucy rejects the advances of Glossin. In Act II Julia jests with Lucy about her brother's love, of which the young daughter of Bertram thus receives the first announcement.

A scene follows, in which the lover of Julia, Henry Bertram, whose identity is not made known to the audience, sings a song beneath her window, and visits her room; Dominie Sampson blunders in, and a comedy scene is made of the efforts of the maid and Julia to get him out of the way. The scene changes to a heath, over which Bertram is wandering in search of his way to Kippletringen. He encounters Dandie Dinmont, and announces himself as Captain Brown of the Fusileers. After his abduction he had grown up abroad, and made his way in the service. Dinmont refers to the dangers of the moor, and speaks of "an old woman, Meg Merrilies, the queen of 'em, that deals wi' the devil, they say, and can make 'em do anything, if she but lifts her finger; she's known for a witch all over these parts. Scene III is the gypsy camp. Sebastian and Gabriel tell of the return of Dirk Hatteraick, the smuggler, who has, for the night, some plan in hand; the facts of the abduction of the boy are recalled; the purpose is to again put Bertram out of the way, or to hold him as a means of power over Glossin, the rascally lawyer being interested in preventing his return in order to retain the estate of Ellangowan.

Sebastian asks, "What does Meg Merrilies say—she whom we must all obey?" Gabriel replies: "She say? why she doats; she's no more what she was, or ought to be; she's turned tender-hearted, and swears she'll hinder us from lifting a finger against the lad of Ellan-gowan, and that if we attempt to keep him from his own, we but fight against fate." The two travelers are lured into camp, and sit down to a table to food. (Meg Merrilies darts from behind the tent, R., when Bertram speaks; advances softly a step or two, and gazes intently on him.)

DIN.—"This is capital brandy, too! It will be moonshine brandy, I reckon. The smugglers and gypsies are all one man's children. But, Lord, Captain, (since you say you are a Captain,) did you ever in your life see a woman stand staring as that old Gypsy woman has been staring at you? That's she, I take it, I told you of: She they call Meg Merrilies, the ruler, and terror of them all."

BERT.—(Turning around and observing Meg.) "My good woman do you know me, that you look at me so hard?" (rises.)

MEG.—"Better than you know yourself."

BERT.—"Aye, Aye; that is, you'll tell my future fortune."

MEG.—"Yes, because I know your past."

BERT.—"Indeed, then you have read a perplexed page."

MEG.—“ It will be clearer soon.”

BERT.—“ Never less likely.”

MEG.—“ Never more so.”

BERT.—(offering money.) “ Your manner is wild and oracular enough ; come give me a proof of your art.”

MEG.—“ Offer it not. If with a simple spell, I cannot recall times which you have long forgotten, hold me the miserablest imposter. Hear me, hear me, Henry, Henry Bertram !”

BERT.—“ Henry Bertram ! Sure, I have heard that name ; but when and where—”

MEG.—“ Hark ! Hark ! to the sound of other days ! Listen and get your heart awake. Girl, come hither ; sing me the song I used to sing to Betram's babe. (The gypsy girl sings the air which Miss Betram sang but much more wildy. It is possible that Miss Cushman departed from the usage, as indicated by this stage direction, in the first performances at the Park, but it is not definitely ascertainable ; her own singing of the air was a feature of her later performances.)

AIR.—“ *Gypsy Girl.*”

Oh ! Hark thee young Henry,

Thy sire is a knight,

Thy mother a lady,

So lovely and bright ;

The hills and the dales,

From the towers which we see,

They all shall belong,

My dear Henry, to thee.

Oh ! rest thee, babe ; rest thee, babe ;

Sleep on till day ;

Oh ! rest thee, babe ; rest thee, babe ;

Sleep while you may.

BERT.—“These words do indeed thrill my bosom with strange emotions. Woman, speak more plainly and tell me why those sounds thus agitate my inmost soul; and what ideas they are, that thus darkly throng upon my mind at hearing them.

Meg speaks :

Listen youth, to words of power,
Swiftly comes the rightful hour!
They who did thee scathe and wrong,
Shall pay their deeds by death ere long.
The dark shall be light
And the wrong made right,
And Bertram's right and Bertram's might,
Shall meet on Ellangowan's height!

(Exit Gabriel up the rocks, after appearing to give France some directions.)

BERT.—(Stands gazing on her, thoughtful and surprised.) Bertram! Bertram! Why does that name sound so familiar to me?

DIN.—“He is bewitched, for certain. There was always witchcraft and devilry among the gypsy clan, I have heard.”

Meg.—(who has watched Gabriel up.) And now begone, Franco, guide the strangers on their way to Kippletringen. Yet, stay; let me see your hand. (leads him forward) “What say these lines of the fortunes past? Wandering and woe, and danger, and crosses in love and friendship! What of the future? Honor, wealth, prosperity, love, reward, and friendship reunited! But what of the present? Aye there's a trace which speaks of danger, of captivity, perchance, but not of death!” (Looks cautiously around, then beckons Dinmont, and speaks in a very low, deep

voice.) If you are attacked, be men and let your hands defend your heads! I will not be far distant from you in the moment of need. And now begone! Fate calls you! Away, away, away! (She retires into the tent.)

Bertram and Dinmont proceed on their way guided by Franco. The purpose is to betray them into the hands of Dirk upon giving a signal. Meg appears upon an eminence, disconcerting the gypsies, but Dirk Hatteraick and his sailors attack; Dirk is knocked down and made a prisoner.

Act III., Scene 1, ELLANGOWAN.—

The seashore, with the castle on the rocks. Enter Meg, L.

MEG—"From one peril I have preserved young Bertram! His greatest and his last is still to come. From that, too, will I protect him; for I was born to raise the house of Ellangowan from its ruins."

(Enter Sebastian, R.) Now, Sebastian, thy tidings?

SEB.—Dirk Hatteraick has sent his orders by me, for our crew to meet him instantly at the old tower of Derncleugh.

MEG.—Hatteraick, Why was he not secured, and taken to Dinmont, and the youth to Glossin's? Is he not in the hands of justice?

SEB.—"He was; but he has slipped through its fingers, and without much difficulty; for they were opened to him on purpose."

MEG.—"What meanest thou?"

SEB.—"Why that his old friend, Justice Glossin con-

trived that he should effect his escape from the Castle-keep, where he was confined; and the friendly smuggler and lawyer meet to-night in the cavern of Derncleugh Tower, where we are to assist them in making sure (as they call it) of that younker of Ellangowan, whom Glossin is to separate from his sturdy companion, and send over the heath alone."

MEG.—"I understand it—his death is purposed; and they have chosen the scene of one murder to commit another. Right! The blood spilt on that spot has long cried for vengeance, and it shall fall upon them. Sebastian, speed to Dinmont and the youth; tell them not to separate for their lives; guide them to the glen near the tower; there let them wait till Glossin and Hatteraick meet in the cavern, and I will join them. Away, and do my bidding! (exit Sebastian, R. H.)—Now to send to Mannering—I must remain on the watch myself; Gabriel I dare not trust. Ha! Who comes now? The girl herself and Abel Sampson, Henry Bertram's ancient tutor! It shall be so."—(Retires R.) (Julia and Lucy enter, and later Dominie Sampson; after a brief turn, as they are going, Meg stops them.)

MEG.—"Stop! I command ye!"

SAMPS.—"Avoid thee!" (Starts and runs back,)

JUL.—"What a frightful creature! Here! Here! Here! (Holding her purse to Sampson.) Give her something and bid her go."

MEG.—"I don't want your trash."

LUCY.—"She is mad!"

MEG.—"No; I am not mad. I've been imprisoned for mad—scourged for mad—banished for mad; but mad I am not."

LUCY.—“For mercy’s sake, good woman, what is it you want?”

MEG.—“Go hence, Lucy Bertram and Julia Mannering; there’s no harm meant you, and, maybe, much good at hand. Hence! It is Abel Sampson I want.”

SAMPS. (Aside.) “’Tis Meg Merrilies, renowned for her sorceries! I haven’t seen her for many a year. My blood curdles to hear her! Young ladies depart and fear not. I am somewhat tremulous, but vigorous! Lo! I will resist. (Edges round between the ladies and Meg, to cover their retreat; they go off. L. points his long cane at her) I am perturbed at thy words. Woman, I conjure thee! (She advances.) Nay, then, I will flee incontinently.”

MEG.—“Halt! and stand fast, or ye shall rue the day, while a limb of you hangs together.”

SAMPS.—“Conjuro te, nequissima, et scelleratissima!”

MEG.—“What gibberish is that? Go from me to Col. Mannering.”

SAMPS.—“I am fugacious.” (He attempts to fly, she makes at him.)

MEG.—“Stay, thou tremblast! Drink of this.” (Offers a flask.)

SAMPS.—I am not athirst, most execrable—I mean excellent.

MEG.—“Drink, and put some heart in you, or I will——”

SAMPS.—“Lo! I obey!” (Drinks.)

MEG.—“Can your learning tell you what that is?”

SAMPS.—“Praise be thy bounty, brandy.”

MEG.—“Will you remember my errand now?”

SAMPS.—“I will, most pernicious; that is, pertinaciously.”

MEG.—“Then tell Col. Mannering, if ever he owed a debt to the house of Ellangowan, and hopes to see it prosper, he must come instantly, armed, and well attended, to the glen below the tower of Dorncleugh; and fail not on his life! You know the spot.”

SAMPS.—“I do, where you once dwelt, most accursed—that is, most accurate.”

MEG.—“Aye, Abel Sampson, there blazed my hearth for many a day! and there beneath the willows that hung its garlands over the brook, I’ve sat and sung to Harry Bertram songs of the old time.”

SAMPS.—(Aside.) “Witch-rhymes and incantations—I wish I could abscond.”

MEG.—“The tree is withered now, never to be green again; and old Meg Merrilies will never sing blithe songs more. (Crosses to R.) But I charge you, Abel Sampson, when the heir shall have his own, as soon he shall—”

SAMPS.—“Woman! What sayest thou?”

MEG.—“That you tell him not to forget Meg Merrilies, but to build up the old walls in the glen for her sake, and let those that live there be too good to fear the beings of another world; for if ever the dead come back among the living, I will be seen in that glen many a night after these crazed bones are whitened in the mouldering grave.”

SAMPS.—“Fears and perturbations creep upon me; but I will speak, soothingly, unto her. (Aside.) Assuredly, Mistress Margaret Merrilies, I will go whither thou biddest me, and remember thy behest; but touching the return of little Henry Bertram, I opine—”

MEG.—“I have said it, old man! Ye shall see him

again, and the best lord he shall be that Ellangowan has seen these hundred years. But you're o'er long here.—To Mannering! Away! and bid him come to that spot, instantly, or the heir of Ellangowan may perish forever."

SAMPS.—"I will hie me nimbly, most fascinorous—I would say fascinating. Prodigious! Prodigious! Prodigious! (This he repeats as Meg motions him off., L. She stands looking after him, her arm pointed in the direction he is going.) .

MEG.—"Now, then, to complete the work of fate; the moment is at hand when all shall behold:

"Bertram's right, and Bertram's might,
Meet on Ellangowan's height." (Exit, R.)

The young ladies arrive at Col. Mannering's and shortly Sampson appears with his message. The closing scene is in the cavern, near the tower of Derncleugh, the broken and left entrance at the summit of the stage, from which descends a rugged path; another dark and narrow passage hewn in the rock below. Hatteraick is discovered walking up and down in the vault over the embers of a fire, with the gestures of one who finds it difficult to keep warm. Glossin enters with a dark lantern; they confer, and then;

(Meg Merrilies appears through the narrow entrance, R., attended by Bertram and Dinmont.)

MEG.—(In a deep whisper to Bertram.) "Will you believe me now? You shall hear them attest all I

have said; but do not stir until I give the sign." (They retire, R. H.)

DIRK.—(Who has been warming himself.) "Is Sebastian true, think you?"

GLOSS.—"True as steel! I fear none of them but old Meg."

MEG.—(Steps forward to them.) "And what do you fear from her?"

GLOSS.—(Aside.) "What fury has brought this hag hither. (To Meg.) Nay, nothing, nothing, my good mother; I was only fearing you might not come here to see our old friend, Dirk Hatteraick, before he left us."

MEG.—"What brings him back with the blood of the Kennedy upon his hands?"

DIRK.—"It has dried up, you hag; it has dried twenty years ago."

MEG.—"It has not! It cries night and day, from the bottom of this dungeon, to the blue arch of heaven; and never so loudly as at this moment! and yet you proceed as if your hands were whiter than the lily."

DIRK.—"Peace, you fool witch! or I will make you quiet."

GLOSS.—"No violence, no violence against honest Meg! I will show her such good reasons for what we have further to do. You know our purpose, I suppose?"

MEG.—"Yes, to murder an inoffensive youth, the heir of Ellangowan. And yet, you treacherous cur, that bit the charitable hand that fed you, will you again be helping to kidnap your master's son? Beware! I always told ye evil would come on ye, and in this very cave."

GLOSS.—"Hark ye, Meg, we must speak plain to

you! My friend, Dirk Hatteraick, and I, have made up our minds about this youngster, and it signifies nothing talking, unless you have a mind to share his fate. You were as deep as we in the whole business."

MEG.—" 'Tis false! You forced me to consent that you should hurry him away, kidnap him, plunder him; but to murder him was your own device! Yours! and it has thriven you well."

DIRK.—"The old hag has croaked nothing but evil bodings these twenty years; she has been a rock ahead to me all my life."

MEG.—"I, a rock ahead! The gallows is your rock ahead."

DIRK.—"Gallows! you hag of Satan, the hemp is not sown that shall hang me."

MEG.—"It is sown and it is grown, and hackled and twisted. Did I not tell you that the boy would return in spite of you? Did I not say, the old fire would burn down to a spark, and blaze up again?" (Here the party appears on watch.)

DIRK.—"You did, but all is lost, unless he's now made sure. Ask Glossin else."

MEG.—"I do, and in the name of heaven, demand if he will yet forego his foul design against his master's son."

GLOSS.—"What! and give up all to this Brown, or Bertram; this infernal male that's come back? Never!"

MEG.—"Bear witness, heaven and earth! They have confessed the past deed and proclaimed their present purposes. (She throws a little flax, dipt in spirits of wine, on the fire, which blazes up to the roof, at this signal, Bertram rushes upon Glossin—Dinmont upon Hatteraick, and masters his sword. Hatteraick

suddenly fires a pistol at Meg, who falls with a loud scream, and rushing up to the entrance of the cavern, he is met by Mannering and soldiers, who instantly secure him and Glossin. Servants follow with lights.)

COL. MANN.—“ Carry off these villains; we have heard their own tongues seal their guilt. Justice shall do the rest. (Exeunt soldiers with prisoners U. E. L.) And look to this unfortunate woman. Hasten, someone, for proper assistance.”

MEG.—“ Heed me not—I knew it would be this way, and it has ended as it ought—bear me up—let me but see my master’s son, let me but behold Henry Bertram, and bear witness to him, and the gypsy vagrant has nothing to do with life.”

SAMPS.—(Without, U. E. L.) “ This way, Miss Lucy, this way. Where, where is little Harry Bertram? I must behold the infant, the dear child. (He rushes on, impatiently, followed by Miss Bertram and Miss Mannering; and stands opposite to Bertram, gazing on him. Villagers and country folk follow and range at back.) Beattissime! It is his father alive. It is, indeed, Harry, little Harry Bertram! Look at me, my child! Do you remember me, Abel Sampson?”

BERT.—“ A light breaks in upon me—yes, that was indeed my name, and that—that is the voice and figure of my kind old master.”

SAMPS.—“ Miss Lucy Bertram, look! lo! behold!—is he not your father’s living image? Embrace him, and let fall your tears upon a brother’s cheek.”

MISS BERT.—“ My brother! My long lost brother restored to his rights! Welcome, oh, welcome to a sister’s love!”

MEG.—(Suddenly raising herself.) “ Hear ye that? He’s owned! There’s a living witness, and here, here

is one, who will soon speak no more. Hear her last words! There stands Henry Bertram; shout, shout, and acknowledge him lord of Ellangowan!" (The people shout.) "My ears grow dull—stand from the light and let me gaze upon him; the darkness is in my eyes." (Sinks into the arms of Bertram and Col. Mannering.)

COL. MANN—"Come hither, some of you—bear her to Woodbourne House—let all care be taken of her support, and bear her gently away, she may yet recover." (Meg is borne away, R.)

Henry Morley, in his "Journal of a London Play-Goer," says: "Guy Mannering is very nicely produced at the Haymarket. The scenery is new, the cast is tolerably good, and there is one piece of acting in it of an excellent and very striking kind. Miss Cushman's melodramatic Meg Merrilies has quite indisputably the attributes of genius about it as any piece of poetry or tragedy could have. Such is her power over the feeling and intention of the part that the mere words of it become a secondary matter. It is the figure, the gait, the look, the gesture, the tone, by which she puts beauty and passion into language the most indifferent. When the artifices are continued through a series of scenes a certain strain becomes apparent, and the effect is not wholly agreeable. Nevertheless, it is something to see what the

unassisted resources of acting may achieve with the mere idea of a fine part, stripped of fine language, unclothed, as it were, in words. The human tenderness blending with the Eastern picturesqueness of gesture, the refined sentiment breaking out from beneath that heavy feebleness and clumsiness of age, are wonderfully startling."

Vandenhoff: "It is in deeply-shadowed, lurid-tinged characters of a low order, like this and Meg Merrilies,—half human, half demon,—with the savage, animal reality of passion, and the weird fascination of crime, redeemed by fitful flashes of womanly feeling,—that she excels."

Lawrence Barrett: "Almost masculine in manner, there was a gentleness in her which only her intimates could know. The voice which crooned the lullaby of the Bertrams' so tenderly came from a heart as gentle as infancy."

Miss Jewsbury, as quoted by Miss Stebbins: "Her Meg Merrilies, and that strange, silent spring to the middle of the stage, which was her entrance on it, can never be forgotten; nor the tones of her voice, which seemed to come from another world. Madame Vestris

said that Meg Merrilies made her turn cold. The song she sang in the part was exactly as Meg would have given it, and suggested no other person, and no acting."

Adam Badeau, in the "Vagabond:" "Her marvellous talent for what is technically called 'making up,' presents us with the picture that lives so indelibly in our memory; her exquisite elocution enables her to accommodate her voice to the necessities of the unusual situations of the play, to break it with age, to thicken it with the choking of death, to loosen it in the cry of agony, to repress it in the hollow murmur of despair; while the genius that makes her feel so acutely the proprieties of the character is only equalled by the consummate art that dictates and accomplishes such touches as her sliding side-long gait; her frantic but significant gestures; her attitudes so ungainly, but so widely expressive, that they speak more forcibly than words. I can conceive of no more exact, no more effective picture, than that afforded by Miss Cushman's performance of Meg Merrilies."

The *London Times*: "The Meg of Miss Charlotte Cushman is a great work of histrionic genius, and moreover a work in which

the mark of greatness is so palpably impressed that it is no sooner seen than it is recognized by an audience. The appearance of that haggard, supernatural form fixed in an attitude that might be studied by a painter, gives a new turn to the entire piece. A presence of a higher order is manifested, but for a few minutes it seems doubtful whether the strange being is animate or inanimate, an actual woman, or some fantastic image produced in a wild landscape by a freak of nature, such as the imagination may trace in the rocks or trees, that one meets in a midnight walk through some desolate region. Then the figure becomes obviously animate, lives, moves and is even impressive in its gestures, its grandeur is not lost, but we are surprised to find that an apparition that seemed so terrible can become an object of sympathy. The fondness with which Meg Merrilies acknowledges Harry Bertram, the ravenous affection with which she presses his hand and devours him with her wild eyes, is exquisitely pathetic, the more so because something of the ferocious is blended with that maternal emotion which the sight of a favorite child is supposed to awaken in the bosom of an old doting nurse. The utter-

ance of the prophecy brings with it another change. As Meg Merilies pronounces the distich :

‘Bertram’s might and Bertram’s right
Shall meet on Ellangowan’s height,’

she rises into an ancient sybil, and seems ready to soar from the ground through the elevated character of her mission. She is now no longer the grotesque hag or the doting grandame, but a pythian priestess, sublime in her inspiration. And all this is done, not by the part itself, but by the actress. Meg Merilies can be played, has been played over and over again, as a part of melodramatic ‘business,’ moving in the most ordinary routine, and only striking, from the oddity of the costume. Miss Cushman lifts it up from common melodrame into the highest rank of tragedy, and is rewarded, not with the common round of applause, but with the expressive murmur of approbation. There was something in the manner in which she was ‘called’ last night very different from those ‘calls’ which seem to be the result rather of good-natured custom than of intelligent approval.”

Cuthbert Bede, in an article in *Belgravia*, speaks of a Mr. Coleman, an actor of repute,

who was so impressed with Charlotte Cushman's Meg Merrilies that he undertook the part and played it with considerable skill. Of course this kind of thing must be referred back to the customary weird hags on the blasted heath in Macbeth; and, for that matter, the old hag is one of the conventional properties of melodrama.

Meg Merrilies was a great performance, not because it was to a certain extent melodramatic, but because it was true and tragic, with infinite touches of tenderness and of emotions common to humanity. As a work of art Meg Merrilies is perfect in its dramatic use. She does not appear until late in the action, but everything is prepared for her, and the action is swift from that moment on. To Charlotte Cushman's Meg was given a dominion over the progress of the play, and over the hearts of the audience from her first appearance. As melodramatic as was the apparition of the figure the attitude of appealing love humanized it at once; when she delivered the prophecy she carried the conviction of her powers of divination, struck the key-note of the supernatural that blended perfectly with the simple and yet romantic story. Poetic and tender rather than melodramatic

was the effect of her pledge that her spirit would revisit the earth, and "be seen in the glen many and many a night, after these old crazed bones are whitening in the grave." The play, under this new influence, belonged to Meg, and it was proper to change the ending so as not to let Meg be put aside as in the original version. The gnarled hands were not those of the familiar melodrama, the claw-like fingers were not more suggestive of savagery than of hardship undergone; the awful death scene touched the heart with pity and terror—it was a tragedy.

CHAPTER VI.

NANCY SYKES.

“**O**LIVER TWIST,” as arranged in the Park Theatre version, is in four acts. The first scene introduces the officious Mr. Bumble, the parochial officer, and Mrs. Corney, the hard matron of the workhouse at Mudfog, in amatory conversation. Oliver Twist, a recent charge, is referred to. Mrs. Corney is called away, and on return reports the death of old Sally, the nurse, who had attended Agnes, the mother of the boy, and had appropriated from the body of the dead woman a ring and a locket marked with that simple name. The second scene is devoted to the boy inmates of the poor house; Oliver resents Noah Claypole’s talk about his mother, knocks him down, and runs away; he is then seen wandering on his way to London; is met by the Artful Dodger, who shares with him his wayside meal, takes him to Fagin’s den; a scene depicting the relations with the Jew fence of the coterie of youthful rogues is given, while Fagin makes them rehearse certain tricks of stealing as a

preliminary bit of instruction to Oliver. The entire innocence of the child in the intent of the "games" is apparent; on the street the Dodger steals a handkerchief from the pocket of Mr. Brownlow, who is reading at a book-stall, a cry is raised, the young rogues run off, and young Oliver is taken in custody by the noisy crowd of pursuers; in the police court Oliver is released, and Fang, a kind of Dogberry, is on the point of committing Mr. Brownlow to prison instead. In the second act, Oliver is found installed in the house of the benevolent Mr. Brownlow; a street scene follows introducing Fagin and Bill Sykes, the burglar, who express apprehension that Oliver may say enough to lead to the discovery of the gang of thieves, and they purpose to regain possession of the boy; Sykes says that he has employed Nancy, whom we at once assume to be his associate in crime:

SYKES.—"And here she comes, with a bonnet, apron, basket, and a street-door key complete" (Enter Miss Nancy, L., arrayed according to the description of Mr. Sykes.) "So Nancy, you are on the scent, are you?"

NAN.—"Yes, Bill, I am; and tired enough of it I am, too. The young brat has been ill and confined to the crib; and—"

FAG.—"I say, Nancy, my tere, I want you to go somewhere for me."

NAN.—“Where?”

FAG.—“To Mr. Brownlow’s house, at Pentonville, and inquire for Oliver Twist.”

NAN.—“I won’t go.”

FAG.—“But, Nancy, blesh my heart, what a pretty creature, you are.”

NAN.—“I know I am, But there—I won’t, and it’s no use trying it on.”

SYK.—“What do you mean by that?”

NAN.—“What I say.”

SYK.—“Why you are just the person for it. Nobody about there knows anything of you.”

NAN.—“And I don’t want ’m to, neither, it’s rather more no than yes with me.”

SYK.—“She’ll go.”

NAN.—“No she won’t,” (loudly.)

SYK.—“Yes, she will!”

NAN.—“Well! and if I do—to oblige you, Mr. Sykes—what shall I say?”

SYK.—“Why, if a woman don’t know what to say, I’m blöwed if I know what to tell ’em.”

NAN.—“I’ve got it—I’ll say I’m his sister, that he has been stolen away.” (With much pathos.) “Oh, my brother, my dear, sweet, innocent little brother! Oh, dear!”

FAG.—“There; very good, indeed. Ah, you are a clever girl. She’s a honor to her sex; and I wish they was all like her.”

NAN.—“Dye my silk stockings, if it ain’t the boy himself acoming!”

SYK.—“Get into the beer shop, Fagin, get away altogether.” (Pushing Fagin.)

FAG.—“I will, my tere.” (Sykes goes into beer-shop. Fagin exits L. Enter Oliver with books, R.)

OLI.—“What a change is this! How happy and contented I ought to be. Oh, what would I give if little Dick could see me now.” (Enter butcher’s boy, R.)

NAN.—“Is it possible—at last I have found him!” (Throws her arms round the neck of Oliver.) “My brother! my dear brother! Oh! oh! oh!”

OLI.—“Don’t. Let go of me. Who is it? What are you stopping me for?” (Attracted by the ejaculations of Nancy, enter several people, R. and L.)

NAN.—“Oh, my gracious! I’ve found him! Oh, Oliver! Oh, you naughty boy to make me suffer such distress on your account. Come home, dear, come. Thank gracious, however, I’ve found him. Oh! oh! oh!” (Falls into the arms of a carpenter.)

WOMAN.—“Don’t you think you had better run for a doctor, butcher?”

BUTCHER.—“No, I don’t.”

NAN.—“Oh, no, no, no—never mind, I’m better now, (grasping Oliver by the hand.) Come home, directly, you cruel boy—come—”

WOM.—“What’s the matter, m’am?”

NAN.—“Oh, m’am, he ran away near a month ago, from his parents, who are hardworking people, and joined a set of bad characters, and almost broke his mother’s heart.

WOM.—“Go home, you wretch, you little brute, you!”

OLI.—“I’m not! I don’t know her—I haven’t got any sister, or father or mother.”

NAN.—“Oh, only hear him, how he braves it out!”

OLI.—“Why, it’s Nancy.”

NAN.—“There, you see he knows me. Make him

come home, good people, or he'll kill his poor mother and father, and break my heart!" (Enter Sykes.)

SYK.—"What the devil is this? What! Young Oliver! Come home to your poor mother, you young dog." (Seizing him.)

WOM.—"Oh, you shameful child!"

OLI.—"I don't belong to them. Oh, let me go! Help! help!"

SYK.—"Help! Yes, I'll help you. What books are these?" (Taking them from him.) "Give 'em here!" (Strikes the boy with them on the head.)

WOM.—"That's right, That's the only way to bring him to his senses."

SYK.—"And he shall have it, too."

NAN.—"Good heavens! Don't hurt him much, good gentlemen, but take him to his mother. I—m—I am going to hysterics—I am—"

WOM.—"Oh, look at his poor sister!"

SYK.—"Come along, young rebel." (Sykes drags Oliver off, L. The mob follow, with Miss Nancy loudly screaming, and apparently in strong hysterics.)

The third scene finds Oliver again in the clutches of Fagin; Nancy and Sykes are present; Sykes demands of Fagin the five-pound note and takes it, cheerfully referring the old rogue to the books as his share of the plunder. Oliver protests vehemently and finally rushes down the stairway to return to his benefactor; Fagin cries that he will be ruined, and—

SYK.—"The dog's outside the door; he'll—" (going to the door. Nancy stands before it.)

NAN.—“ You shan't set on the dog—he'll tear the boy to pieces.”

SYK.—“ Stand off from me—(as she clings to him)—or I'll split your skull against the wall ! ”

NAN.—“ I don't care for that, Bill. The child shan't be hurt by the dog unless you first kill me.” (Enter Fagin and boys, with Oliver.)

SYK.—“ Shan't he? I'll soon do that if you don't keep off.”

FAG.—“ What's the matter here? ”

SYK.—“ The girl's gone mad.”

NAN.—“ No, she hasn't.”

SYK.—“ Then keep quiet.”

NAN.—“ No, I won't.” (Fagin produces a knotted club stick.)

FAG.—“ So you wanted to get away, did you?—wanted to call for the police, eh? ” (He is about to strike Oliver a violent blow, when Nancy, with a sudden rush, makes herself mistress of the stick, and stands in a protecting attitude over Oliver.)

NAN.—“ Now, strike the boy, if you dare—any of you ! ”

FAG.—“ But, Nancy, my tere—”

NAN.—“ Don't dear me! I won't stand by and see it done! You have got the boy, and what more would you have? Let him be then, or I will put that mark on you that will bring me to the gallows before my time ! ”

SYK.—“ What do you mean? Burn my body! Do you know who you are and what you are? ”

NAN.—“ Oh, yes, I know all about it—well—well—” (Shaking her head with assumed indifference.)

SYK.—“ You're a nice one—to take up the human and genteel side!—a pretty subject for the child to make a friend.”

NAN.—“ God help me ! I am ! I am ! and I wish I had been struck dead in the streets before I had lent a hand in bringing him to where he is. Ah, me ! He's a thief from this night forth—and isn't that enough without any more cruelty ? ”

FAG.—“ Civil words.”

NAN.—“ Civil words, Fagin ! Do you deserve them from me ? Who taught me to pilfer and to steal, when I was a child not half so old as this ?—You ! I have been in the trade and in your service twelve years since, and you know it well—you know you do ! ”

FAG.—“ And if you have, it's your living.”

NAN.—“ Ah ! it is—it is my living ! and the cold, wet, dirty streets are my home ! and you are the wretch who drove me to 'em long ago, and that'll keep me there until I die.”

FAG.—“ I shall do you a mischief—a mischief worse than that—if you say much.”

NAN.—“ Devil ! ” (She rushes at Fagin. Sykes snatches the stick from her, then seizes her waist. Nancy utters a piercing scream, then, with a look of concentrated hate and horror at Fagin, she faints in the arms of Sykes.)

Bumble hears of the reward offered by Mr. Brownlow for information concerning Oliver, and, in a following scene, gives him a bad name ; Sykes and Fagin arrange in the presence of Nancy to commit Oliver to an evil life by making him commit an act of burglary ; Nancy, in this scene gives a momentary expression of grief at his fate, saying, “ I had a brother about

his age that looked like him in his coffin." Toby Crackitt, Sykes, and Barney, repair, with Oliver, to the scene, Mr. Brownlow's house; Oliver is put through the window, with instruments to open the door; a pistol shot is heard within; Oliver staggers and falls, the others escape. In Act III, Bumble and Mrs. Corney are discovered married and miserable; they are visited by Monks, who, it appears, is Oliver's older brother, a wicked dog, in search of certain proofs of the boy's birth, which he wishes to destroy; Nancy, in the next scene, overhears the conversation between Monks and Fagin plotting against Oliver:

Scene 3.—The garret of Sykes. Sykes discovered lying in bed wrapped in a great coat, a soiled night cap and a black beard of a week's growth; seated by him is Nancy, patching an old waistcoat.

NAN.—(Kissing his lips.) "He is better and stronger now, thank heaven! I have seen the good kind lady, Miss Maylie, and have warned her of the danger threatening Oliver, but without implicating him (pointing to Sykes) or others. Let me think! How was my promise worded?—That should they wish to find me, come what might, I would, every Saturday night, be on London Bridge from the hour of eleven till midnight!"

SYK.—(Starting from his sleep.) "Who's there? Bar! bar the door! Oh! it's only you—what's o'clock, Nancy?"

...

NAN.—“Near upon ten. How do you feel to-night?”

SYK.—“As weak as water! Here lend us a hand, and let us get off this thundering bed anyhow—do you hear?”

NAN.—“Don’t be cross, now—it’s not your nature!”

SYK.—“Aren’t it though?”

NAN.—“You wouldn’t—no, I am sure you wouldn’t be hard upon me to-night?”

SYK.—“No!—and why not?”

NAN.—(Placing her hand on his shoulder and looking in his face.) “Such a number of nights as I’ve been patient with you, nursing and caring for you as if you had been a child—and this the first time that I have seen you like yourself—come, you wouldn’t have served me as you did just now if you’d have thought of that, would you? Say you wouldn’t?”

SYK.—“Well, then I wouldn’t (She burst into tears.) Well! Why, what are you whining about now, Nancy?”

NAN.—“Don’t seem to mind me! it will soon be over!”

SYK.—“What will soon be over? Get up and bustle about, and don’t be coming over with woman’s nonsense.”

Fagin and the Dodger and Bates enter; after a little, Nancy, remembering her promise to be on London Bridge, attempts to leave and is prevented, she struggles painfully and falls insensible. In Act IV, Nancy meets Brownlow and Rose Maylie, tells them of the plot of Monks; in the parting Brownlow asks, “What can I do to serve you?”

NAN.—“ Nothing, for I am past all hope.” (Brownlow offers to provide a retreat for her, and urges her to abandon her life.)

NAN.—“ No, sir, no! I am chained to my old life—I loathe and hate it now, but I can not leave it! I have gone so far to turn back. But a fear comes over me again, and I must go home.”

ROSE.—“ Home?”

NAN.—“ Home, lady! to such a home as I have nursed for myself. Let us part; I shall be watched or seen. Go, go, and if I have done you any service, all I ask is, that you leave me and let me go my way.”

BROWNLOW.—“ We compromise her safety, perhaps, by staying her.”

NAN.—“ Yes, yes! you do—you have.”

ROSE.—“ What! what! can be the end of this poor creature’s life?”

NAN.—“ What? Look before you, lady—look at that dark water! How many times do you read of such as I, who spring into the tide, and leave no living thing to care or bewail them. It may be years hence, or it may be only months, but I shall come to that at last!”

ROSE.—“ Do not speak thus, I pray.”

NAN.—“ It will never reach your ear, lady; and God forbid such horrors should! I must go back to him—good night! good night!”

ROSE.—“ Will you accept this purse?”

NAN.—“ No! no! And yet I would like something you have worn. No, not a ring—no baubles! No! your glove! your handkerchief! (Takes handkerchief.) This, this for a last remembrance will do. God bless you both! Good night! Good night!”

This interview becomes known to Fagin.
The closing scene is in Sykes's garret:

NAN.—“ I think I have escaped unnoticed. Sykes has not yet come home; that's fortunate. I don't know how it is; but I have such a fear and dread upon me to-night that I can hardly stand; and I can think of nothing but horrible thoughts of death and shrouds with blood upon them. I was reading a book before I went out to while away the time, and I'll swear that I saw coffin written in every page, in large black letters! Aye, and they carried one close to me in the street to-night, but I don't think it was real. I will try and sleep till he comes back, and his knock will wake me up. (Lying on bed.) I dreamt last night that Fagin would bring me to an untimely end. How tired I am! I do not hate that man, but I fear him—oh, how I fear him!” (Sleeps. Enter Sykes, D.)

SYK.—“ The Jew has told me all—she has put laudanum in my drink—she has betrayed me. (Rouses her.) Get up!”

NAN.—“ It *is* you! I am so glad!”

SYK.—“ It is Get up!” (Extinguishes light.)

NAN.—“ You've put out the light; but no matter, the day is beginning to dawn, and I'll open the window.”

SYK.—“ Let it be! There's light enough for what I've got to do.” (Seizing her arm and dragging her to centre.)

NAN.—“ Oh! tell me what I've done—I—I won't scream or cry; but speak to me and tell me what I've done.”

SYK.—“ You know! You were watched to-night, and every word was heard!”

NAN.—“Then spare my life, for the love of heaven, as I spared yours! (Clinging to him.) You can not have the heart to kill me! I will not lose my hold! You cannot throw me off! Oh, stop before you spill my blood! I have been true to you—upon my guilty soul!”

SYK.—“Off! Off!”

NAN.—“The good lady and gentleman told me of a home where I could end my days in solitude and peace. Let me see them again, and beg them on my knees to show the same mercy and goodness unto you, and let us never see each other more—let us lead better lives, and forget how we have lived, except in prayer! It is never too late to repent—never!”

SYK.—“You will not loose your hold!”

NAN.—“No—I will hold you till you kiss me and forgive.”

SYK.—“Perdition!” (Music. He drags her off, D. F. A scream is heard, then a fall. Sykes re-enters, pale and trembling.) “There is blood upon these hands and she is dead.” (Rushes out.)

Sykes, in attempting to escape by the house tops by means of a rope is caught by it and strangled in the air.

Clara Erskine Clement reports Lawrence Barrett on this performance, as follows: “It was an astonishing thing, as well to those of the profession as to the public—but the death scene was simply superlative in effect; she dragged herself on to the stage in a wonderful manner, and keeping her face away from the

audience, produced a chilly horror by the management of her voice, as she called for Bill, and begged him to kiss her. It sounded as if she spoke through blood, and the whole effect was far greater than that which any other actress has ever made, with the sight of the face and all the horrors which can be added." Mr. Wemyss, writing from a recollection of her early performances of the part, says: "As a portrait of female depravity it was powerfully correct, and in all her future career she never surpassed the excellence of that performance. Vandenhoff says: "Her greatest part, fearfully natural, dreadfully intense, horribly real, was Nancy Sykes, in the dramatic version of *Oliver Twist*; it was too true; it was painful, this actual presentation of Dickens' poor abandoned, abused, murdered outcast of the streets; a tigress, with a touch and but one, of woman's almost deadened nature, blotted and trampled under foot by man's cruelty and sin."

The scenes of this play, and some account of Miss Cushman's acting in it, are given prominently, because the range of her powers are thereby indicated. It is obvious that this piece is of an entirely different order from the poetic tragedy of *Queen Katherine* and *Lady*

Macbeth. Her success in the commonplaces of crime completely disposes of any possibility of fixed mannerism in the art of the actress. Here was a study from life. Imagine a tragedy queen in the cajolery of young Oliver in the first scene! It is very likely that her performance of the part at the Park Theatre was better than that of her performance twenty years later. The haggard, sinful creature was no longer on the level of her flight.

CHAPTER VII.

MALE CHARACTERS: ROMEO, CARDINAL WOLSEY, ETC.

SHAKSPERE is fond of providing his loveliest damsels with the trunk and hose ; and booted, like Rosalind, they stand forth, playing with the fancy. The pages in the classic drama, brave in silk and satin, are to this day females ; while the Duke of York, Prince Arthur, and a score of other poetic figures, visit the stage with sure recurrence, embodied in a way to challenge our reason and to please our senses. The burlettas and the romantic opera seem to demand this paradox. Art, in such cases, takes no offense. It would seem easy to establish the limits of feminine intrusion. A point is reached at which the question of taste arises. We may say that it is impossible for a woman to act with sincerity, by reason of temperament and mental characteristics, and elemental nature, in certain roles essentially masculine—that illusion is impossi-

ble. The highest degree of success, we may say, is a kind of failure correspondingly great; and finally we may urge that only eccentricity and a desire for notoriety can be at the bottom of such performances. These objections apply with fatal force to the ordinary trespasser; but they are met at every point by the facts in the case of Charlotte Cushman, and by her virile genius. It is possible that her fame cannot be transmitted in its real substance, in its relation to the like performances; but the power of her Romeo, at least, is too strongly attested to admit of doubt; and it presents angles of view that are helpful in considering her extraordinary genius.

In her near or actual approach to the achievement of the illusion of manhood on the stage Charlotte stands alone. Tradition says as much, and the record is absolutely clear on this point. There is a tradition, with some written history to support it, that Charlotte Crampton's performance of Richard III. was phenomenal in this way; and it may well be believed, for this remarkable creature, a woman of genius, wayward, dissolute and daring, had in her the compelling fire that was akin to that which made Kean's performance so thrilling.

It was of Charlotte Crampton that Macready, on his American tour, after playing with her in "Macbeth," said, "There is a woman that would startle the world—if she were two inches taller." Ellen Tree's performance of Romeo elicited nothing like the public and critical attention that was bestowed on Charlotte Cushman's; and no other woman has ever been thought capable of doing anything with Cardinal Wolsey.

The nearest approach, in dignity and sincerity of effort, to Charlotte Cushman, is the case of Mrs. Siddons, who played Hamlet on several occasions during her career. She, no doubt, brought a strong and subtle study of the character to bear on her performance, but the nondescript garment in which she caprisoned herself, deprived it of that frankness and boldness required by the truth of art. The whole effect was swamped by her denial of Hamlet's identity.

If her "inky cloak" and the other belongings were of a nondescript character, it is on record that in the part of Imogen she was costumed in the full apparel of a beau of the period, of silk and satin.

Miss Cushman played Hamlet at least on one occasion in Dublin.

Peg Woffington and Mrs. Jordan were famous as Sir Harry Wildair in "The Constant Couple." At a later date Miss Woolgar played Lemuel in "The Flowers of the Forest" in a way that helped to make that picturesque melodrama one of the greatest successes of its time. Colley Cibber's notorious daughter, Mrs. Charke, for a long time played only men's parts.

In the mere item of daring Mrs. Glover's performance of Falstaff is more remarkable than Charlotte Cushman's Wolsey. She, it is said, had grown monstrously stout in her latter days, a circumstance that makes her choice of the character altogether the most curious that may be cited. I have seen a playbill of this performance, and it was of singular interest to observe that she was abetted in her benefit performance by some of the most famous and capable actors of Drury Lane Theatre. A strange coincidence is that one of the entertainers on this occasion, a member of the company, was Miss Paton, who obtained great notoriety, being the wife of Lord Lennox, by running away with Wood, the singer; and that this Mr. and Mrs. Wood are the same with whom Miss Cushman made her first

appearance as a public singer in concert at Boston in 1833.

The boards of the Park Theatre were trod by many females in the guise of males many years before our actress saw the footlights either of the world or of the stage. Mrs. Powell played boys' parts in 1801; and at the time that Charlotte Cushman was toddling about as a child, Mrs. Bartley was seen at the Park as Hamlet. Malibran in opera sang Romeo there in 1826, and one of her famous characters was Count Bellino in "The Devil's Bridge," a part to be noted in Miss Cushman's early repertory. Mrs. Barnes used to play Albert in "William Tell" and like parts, and while Charlotte was a member of the company chose Hamlet for her own benefit. Mrs. Pelby had the part of Walter Arlington in "The Idiot Witness" in 1826; and Mrs. Williams played Richard III. in 1827. Mrs. Shaw—the wife of Hamblin, on occasion the leading woman at the Park in Charlotte Cushman's time, played Hamlet frequently, and at the Bowery, in 1839, she was seen in a round of male characters, Romeo, Hamlet, and young Norval, and was as ready to interpret Ion as she was to brave it through the reprehensible

but dashing Jack Sheppard. In 1829 Miss Kelley played Romeo for her benefit at the Park.

It is likely enough that the example of Mrs. Shaw, who was popular and successful, had much influence with Miss Cushman. Precedent brought such exploits within the ordinary doings of the stage. Mrs. Shaw was not a woman with no effectual fire in her, and not an eccentric person.

The innovation of this form of entertainment and endeavor may be traced back to another source. In many rôles the most charming actress that our stage has known—endowed with every physical feminine allurements, artistic by nature, and from early and continued training, with a mind apprehensive of every delicate shade of emotion and circumstance of meaning—was Clara Fisher, that Mrs. Maeder to whom Charlotte Cushman owed her introduction to the stage. She was born in London in 1811. When she was six years old her dramatic instincts were stimulated by witnessing at Drury Lane a performance of "Gulliver in Lilliput," in which the actors were children between the years of six and ten. She was engaged to appear as Lord Flimnap, in a bur-

lesque written by her father, into which was introduced the last act of "Richard III." She became the wonder of the times, for she achieved her successes under conditions even more curious than those that upheld Master Betty and John Howard Payne. As she developed she continued to play, with undeniable and rapturously applauded charm, such parts as Cherubino and Paul, the Pet. Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Shaw had also, in their youth, been likewise engaged. We have seen that Mrs. Shaw continued to play male characters as a feature of some of her engagements. At the very time that Miss Cushman was looking for employment in New York, Miss Jean Davenport, afterwards a star of importance as Mrs. Lander, appeared in a round of parts quite astonishing in their audacity for an infant prodigy: Young Norval; Shylock, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Giles Overreach, Richard III., the Dumb Boy of Manchester, etc. Little Miss Louise Lane, afterwards Mrs. Henry Hunt, and, at this writing, admired as Mrs. John Drew, as the one and incomparable Mrs. Malaprop, in "The Rivals," appeared at the Park in 1826 as a star. She played Albert in "William Tell," Prince Arthur, Goldfinch,

Doctor Pangloss, etc. She became an equal favorite with Clara Fisher in burlettas in such parts as Fortunio, and, like that remarkable actress, was excellent in characters of classic loveliness like Ophelia and Portia. As Mrs. Hunt she played Romeo on the occasion of a benefit at the Park, January 26, 1847. It may be remarked that Charlotte Cushman had, at this time, made her essay as Romeo. The Bateman children began their career by playing Richard III., Tag in "The Spoiled Child," Shylock, Bombastes Furioso, etc. Parts frequently played were Paul and Justin in "Wandering Boys," for example by Mrs. Thorne and Emily Mestayer, Mrs. Barnes and Miss Johnson, Susan and Kate Denin, Fanny and Rosetta Clarke, etc. Eliza Logan and Mrs. G. P. Farren made their first ventures with young Norval and in such characters; while a number of others, stock and star, could be enumerated, in going over the ground indicated. These performances were not confined to the juvenile contingent, nor to a meagre line of characters. The new pieces found actresses who charged themselves with the heroic fustian of Claude Melnotte, for example. Something more than female caprice is to be

discerned in these efforts, for at the New Chatham in 1845, Mr. J. W. Wallack, Jr., was the Mercutio to the Romeo of his wife, formerly Mrs. Sefton. Ione Burke, Mrs. Flynn, Mrs. Jarman, Mrs. Fitz William, Mrs. W. H. Smith, Mrs. Nicholls, and scores of others appeared in male characters more or less in use in this way. Mrs. Mowatt, distinctly a society actress, in so far as a professional can be one, did not disdain male attire. She appeared as Charles II.

One of the most pleasing actresses that ever visited America was Agnes Robertson, the wife of Dion Boucicault and in such parts as Bob Nettles, in "Andy Blake," she was accounted a delight. Madame Celeste was famous in the same line, and in a variety of dashing impersonations. Mrs. Richardson's Oliver Twist and Smike were held to be "the most perfect pictures ever embodied on the stage," and these characters are usually done by actresses, and to the public satisfaction, perhaps better, and, if not with truer illusion, with a greater appeal to the heart than if logic governed the stage management in its making of the cast. There can be no question that Miss Ellen Tree was more to the purpose as Ion than Macready; and he would have to be a

charming youth indeed, who could rescue the Athenian lad from the possession of the female contingent, with whom it has remained up to its latest performance in America by Mary Anderson, a reminiscence of which belongs to the stage experience of a limited number of theatre goers, who recall it as an event. Miss Ellen Tree's Romeo was virile enough, as we may well believe from an incident that Fanny Kemble has preserved in her "Records of a Girlhood." She was to play the Juliet to this daring Romeo, but at the rehearsals she firmly declined to permit the carrying out of a bit of business that consisted in Romeo's lifting Juliet's lifeless form and bearing it to the front of the stage, there to take his last farewell of lips and eyes, and to "seal a dateless bargain with engrossing death." Rolla, in "Pizarro," would seem to be a part utterly unsuited to feminine use. One has only to recall the familiar picture of John Philip Kemble as Rolla, dashing away with Cora's child held aloft by his sturdy, outstretched arm, a theatric moment no less than an exhibition of muscular power. Mrs. Williams played the part at the Park Theatre in 1828, and capped it with a performance of Billy Black.

We have already seen that the players with whom Miss Cushman was associated had appeared in male characters, with serious purpose, and that there was abundant tradition and precedent to influence her view of the proprieties of such stage usage; and reverting once more to the record, we add enough to indicate that more remains untold. Some of these examples are of very curious interest. In 1830, at the Park, one cast shows Mr. Barnes as Mrs. Subtle, Mr. Hilson as Phoebe, and Mrs. Williams as Paul, in "Paul Pry." At the Bowery, Mrs. Hackett played Francis Osbaldistone in "Rob Roy," and Seraskier in "The Siege of Belgrade." In July, 1834, Mrs. Henry selected for her benefit William in "Black-eyed Susan," and this character was performed at intervals by other women, Miss Waring, for example. Captain Macheath in "The Beggar's Opera," had been often done. It is obvious that in much of this there was no serious purpose, while many of the characters were distinctly masculine. Celeste and Vestris, however, were always thoroughly artistic, and did not abuse their own qualities.

The most recent and remarkable performance of the kind ever given was that of "As

You Like It," at Palmer's Theatre, in which in various capacities, nearly one hundred and fifty members of the Professional Women's League participated. The cast was headed by Madam Janaushek as Jaques, and every character was played by an actress. The happy conceit—successfully carried out—was the inspiration of Mrs. A. M. Palmer, and was a tribute possible only to Shakspeare, whose genius compelled illusion, when in his own day the boy actors played the female characters.

It is a friendly misapprehension and not good history to urge, as Miss Cushman's female biographers have done, that Charlotte Cushman was averse to playing Romeo, and that her controlling, if not her sole motive in producing "*Romeo and Juliet*," in her second season in England, was to advance her sister Susan. Her affections were certainly strong, but her common sense and business sense, and her knowledge of her own powers prevailed in this matter. Susan was necessarily subordinate to her. It is not at all true that Charlotte "began the study of the character" of Romeo at this period. One of the very first performances that she gave when she began to assert

herself in 1837 was this very one, and she played it repeatedly, as may be seen by a glance at the record in the second chapter of this book. When she returned to America without her sister, her Juliet, from time to time, as the stock system then permitted, was found in actresses that were far superior to Susan Cushman. Charlotte's main care, no doubt, was to instruct her sister, when she retired to prepare the play, which, moreover, was to be done in a new and restored version of her own, including as much as possible of the original.

A preliminary trial of the venture was given in the provinces, and on the night of December 30, 1845, the sisters appeared at the Princess's Theatre in London. Their success was enormous. The most significant criticism that was elicited, was that written by Sheridan Knowles, and bears such marks of sincere enthusiasm that it may be here given as the best evidence of the merits of Miss Cushman's performance. This eminent dramatic authority said :

" I witnessed with astonishment the Romeo of Miss Cushman. Unanimous and lavish as were the encomiums of the London press, I was not prepared for such a triumph of pure genius. You recollect, perhaps, Kean's Third

the proudest of those which I used to witness years ago, and for a repetition of which I have looked in vain till now. There is no trick in Miss Cushman's performance: no thought, no interest, no feeling seems to actuate her except what might be looked for in Romeo himself were Romeo reality."

Speaking of the performance of the two sisters *The London Times* is not less enthusiastic:

"They played the characters of Romeo and Juliet, not in the ordinary acting tragedy with which David Garrick favored the world, but in the tragedy as written by Shakspeare. Our readers need not be informed that the chief difference between Shakspeare's play and Garrick's adaptation, is that, in the former work, Romeo is represented as in love with Rosaline before he sees Juliet, and that in the last scene he dies before Juliet awakes from her trance, instead of expiring at the end of a long dialogue. It is enough to say that the Romeo of Miss Cushman is far superior to any Romeo that has been seen for years. The distinction is not one of degree, it is one of kind. Miss Cushman's Romeo is a creative, a living, breathing, animated, ardent human being. The memory of the

play-goer will call up Romeo as a collection of speeches delivered with more or less eloquence, not as an individual. Miss Cushman has given the vivifying spark, whereby the fragments are knit together, and become an organized entity. She initiates us into the temperament of the hero, and in this respect the restoration of the allusions to Rosaline is particularly valuable. She disclosed that ardent, passionate disposition, that waited but for the opportunity to break forth with irresistible violence, so that the first scenes contained the whole possibility of the tragedy. They prepared the way for those passionate breathings of love that rendered the interviews with Juliet so remarkable. The short gallant speeches at the ball were delivered with the eagerest spirit of earnestness, as though not a word should fall without kindling a feeling in the breast of the fair hearer. The garden scene was an inspiration, an impetuous outpouring of devotion, here and there tempered by the opposite quality of shrinking reverence. It was no fine speechmaker, no stage lover, no victim to maudlin sentiment, but an impetuous youth, whose whole soul was absorbed in one strong emotion, and whose lips must speak the

inspiration of his heart. The indignation with which Romeo rushed on Tybalt, after the death of Mercutio, was another expression of the same quick, sensitive temperament. The grief in Friar Laurence's cell, when Romeo set forth the sorrows of his banishment in tones of ever increasing anguish, till at last it reached its culminating point, and he dashed himself on the ground with real despair, took the house by storm. All the manifestations of Romeo's disposition were given with equal truth, and the one soul was recognized through them all. To drop to more material considerations Miss Cushman looks Romeo exceedingly well. Her deportment is frank and easy, she walks the stage with an air of command—her eye beams with animation. In a word, Romeo is one of her great successes." At the conclusion of the performance the sisters were called before the curtain with honest, unfeigned enthusiasm by a crowded audience.

Lloyd's *Weekly Messenger*: "Miss Cushman's Romeo must henceforth be ranked among her best performances. It was admirably conceived. Every scene was warm and animated, and at once conveyed the impression of the character. There was no forced or

elaborate attempt at acting or expression. You were addressed by the whole mind; passion spoke in every feature, and the illusion was forcible and perfect. Miss Cushman's particular excellence was in the scene with the friar, and the concluding scenes of the tragedy. We never saw these scenes so justly conceived or so vigorously executed. The judgment was satisfied and the fancy delighted; they had the excellence of all art. Miss Cushman's talents are certain of commanding success in every character in which vigorous and predominant passion are to be delineated. She is temperate, but never tame; her acting always rouses the feelings without offending the taste. She is the best actress that has appeared upon the English stage since the days of Miss O'Neill."

One more report may be added to this already conclusive testimony: "Monday introduced us to such a Romeo as we had never ventured to hope for. Certainly in reading the tragedy feelings of great discontent with certain stage renderings often come across us, and a vague idea that if an artist with some faith in his heart as well as in his art should try the character of Romeo, work might be wrought with other hearts. But we had not

dreamed of so early an outstripping of all our hopes. The glowing reality and completeness of Miss Cushman's performance perhaps produces the strength of the impression with which she sends us away. The character, instead of being shown us in a heap of *disjecta membra*, is exhibited by her in a powerful light which at once displays the proportions and the beauty of the poet's conceptions. It is as if a noble symphony, distorted and rendered unmeaning by inefficient conductors, had suddenly been performed under the hand of one who knew in what *time* the composer intended it should be taken. All Miss Cushman's stage business is founded upon intellectual ideas, and not upon conventionalisms; but it is also most effective in a theatrical light. Her walk and attitudes are graceful; the manner in which the courtesy of the stage is given is very high bred; her fencing is better than skilful, because it is appropriate. Tybalt is struck dead as the lightning strikes the pine; one blow beats down his guard, and one lunge closes the fray; indignation has for a moment the soul of Romeo. With Paris there is more display of swordsmanship; he falls by the hand of the lever, when, 'as fixed, but far too tranquil for

despair'; and the gestures, eloquent as words, in the garden scene, and the piteous lingering over the body of Juliet are portions of the performance which are not likely to pass away from the memory of the spectator, who was compelled in the former to share the lover's enthusiasm, in the latter his agony."

Vanderhoff has something of interest to say of Miss Cushman's early performance of Romeo. He is in error in making the occasion which he describes her first attempt of the part; and his claim to have taught her certain points is not to be fully accepted. He says: "Passing through Philadelphia, played my second engagement at the Walnut Street Theatre, and one night for Marshall's (manager) benefit, on which occasion Charlotte Cushman played Romeo for the first time, I believe. I was Mercutio. I lent her a hat, cloak and sword for the second dress, and believe I may take the credit for having given her some useful hints for the killing of Tybalt and Paris, which she executes in such masculine and effective style—the only good points in this hybrid performance of hers. She looks neither man nor woman in the part—or both, and her passion is equally epicene in form.

Whatever her talents in other parts, I have never yet heard any human being, that had seen her Romeo, who did not speak of it with a painful expression of countenance, more in sorrow than in anger. Romeo requires a man to feel his passion and to express his despair. A woman, in attempting it, unsexes herself to no purpose except to destroy all interest in the play and all sympathy for the ill-fated pair; she denaturalizes the situations, and sets up a monstrous anomaly in place of a consistent picture of ill-starred passion and martyr-love, faithful to death. There should be a law against such perversions; they are high crimes against truth, taste, and æsthetic principles of art, as well as offenses against propriety and desecration of Shakespeare. In his time women did not appear on the stage at all; now they usurp men's parts, and 'push us from our stools.' "

Mr. Vandenhoff, in his pique, does not seem to have stopped to consider the relative propriety of a male Juliet, under the sanction of Shakspeare, and a female Romeo in these later days. Mr. Laurence Hutton, a most competent witness, a man of pure taste, says of her Romeo: "She was earnest, intense and nat-

ural. The constitutional susceptibility of Romeo's character was depicted by her in its boldest relief—a particular phase of the nature of the young Montague, which no male actor, unless he were a mere youth, could efficiently and satisfactorily portray." He also says of her Claude Melnotte that its earnest and truthful manner was effective.

There is not only no apology needed for Charlotte Cushman's Romeo, as her female biographers seem to imagine, but it was one of her most remarkable achievements. Judged by its popularity and long-continued use, and by its financial returns, the performance stands unrivalled in its line. All theoretical, ex-post-facto criticism falls before the facts. It is simple history that this extraordinary performance gave more than satisfaction in the matter of illusion; and while it cannot, by any magic, be made to stand forth in any descriptive record, we may be sure that the production, as an entirety, was built up on recondite imagination and the truest feeling, that at all points the essential effects were achieved, and that there was no weakness or drooping or relaxation in Miss Cushman's manly task. The character is not a harsh one. Juliet is invariably the better

performance in the ordinary course of the production of the piece. There have been as good Romeos, no doubt, but it is altogether possible that the audiences that witnessed Miss Cushman's—in a period of the very best Shaksperian acting—never saw a better one in all particulars except the one of sex, and her genius conquered that with every mind capable of pure emotion and subject to the charm of genius. While her business in the part did not reject all that tradition had attached to it, she gave a performance vivid with imagination.

Miss Cushman's personality and her headship of her little family of dependants, were known to the public in some measure. She was playing the part of a man in these serious relations of life. Without the slightest surrender of womanly traits, she had acquired a positive manner and a direct way of dealing with affairs that told on her art and on the reception of it by the public. She compelled illusion. There was no prudery about her, for she had cast behind her all of those disturbing concerns of feminine emotion, while she kept alive in her the purest affections and the truest intents. She was absolutely sincere, intelligent to the last point, in short, a woman of rare genius. She

was a woman with the strong intellect of a man, and without that obstinacy of mental apprehension that separates the ordinary woman from the concepts of the world, held by men of judgment, experience and sense.

Miss Cushman is the only woman that ever performed the part of Cardinal Wolsey, but that fact, regarded merely as a curious thing, is of no importance. The better fact is that she played it with power. The conditions of illusion, however, do not exist in the figure, clad in robes, and not dominant in fiery, physical action, as is the case with Romeo. It is true that her voice was equal to any rhetorical demand; the imposing nature of the woman—one born to rule—and that power to make you believe in all spiritual things, were hers. A criticism of the *Times* says: "In the third act in which the Cardinal falls from greatness, no actor or actress on the stage can equal her. She realized to our memory the palmy days of the drama, and made old play-goers recall the times of Cooke, Kean and Macready." This performance was not very often given, and its place in her history must be to indicate the mastery the woman had over her art, and what must have been the character of her



CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN. 143

aspect, illuminated with intellectual and spiritual power.

A reference to the list of characters at the Park Theatre will recall many other male characters, such as Claude Melnotte; but a closer view of them, some of them excellent, no doubt, is not essential to the full greatness of Charlotte Cushman. Let the greybeards wag their heads in praise or censure, as they may choose.

But as to her Romeo, the young lady in London was right, "Oh, Miss Cushman is a very dangerous young man."

CHAPTER VIII.

QUEEN KATHERINE, LADY MACBETH, BIANCA, ETC.

IT would impair the distinctness of Charlotte Cushman's fame to attempt to convey the impressions that she left on her generation in the multitude of characters that she played. We may leave out of the account Lady Gay Spanker and a score of parts, and her fame would yet be heaped and running over. A few of the old habitudes of the old Park Theatre, adverse partizans, were never quite willing to forgive the Cinderella of that dramatic fireside for having gone across the ocean to get her golden slippers. Noting her withheld meed of praise in those days, it is odd to read in the "Knickerbocker" magazine the paragraph: "Strange to say, Miss Charlotte Cushman's Lady Macbeth is not the worst in the world." In point of fact the attendance at the stock performances at that time had ruinously declined.

In person Charlotte Cushman was not of the

type required for certain characters. She was capable in whatever she attempted.

In her youth her personal comeliness was adequate. As to her Julia, a friend wrote to Miss Stebbins: "She was lovely, elegant, youthful and espiègle." At best in this matter between beauty and the beast, good sense is the better part. In the 40's the sense of beauty evidently dominated American taste. The English papers thought that Charlotte's Julia in the "Hunchback" "was better if anything than Miss Kemble's;" and surely there was a part that demanded every charm of youth and beauty. In private life Miss Cushman's face lit up with merriment and animation. Her personal presence was charming to those that knew her. Her hair was a wavy chesnut, her eyes blue or dark, her complexion clear and beautiful, her brow broad, the cheek bones prominent, and the nose depressed. She was tall and stoutly built, and in form was commanding, and in youth, shapely.

That Charlotte Cushman was versatile is abundantly evident: there is no need to uphold her comedy as excellent beyond other performances of her day. No doubt she lacked joyousness and lightness in many such parts.

The account of her Rosalind is, however, significant of some personal charm, and of some power in this direction in her early career.

For example: "On Thursday night Miss Cushman gave us the first opportunity of seeing her in a Shaksperian character—the sweet, merry, mocking, deep-feeling, true, loving Rosalind. Whilst under her womanly guise the Rosalind of Miss Cushman was a highbred though most gentle and sweet-tempered lady, with the mirthful spirit which nature had given to her, saddened by the misfortunes of herself and father. But with the indignant reply which she makes to the Duke, her uncle, on being banished as a traitor, this phase of her character disappears. No sooner is the plan of flight conceived and resolved upon, and the words uttered, 'Were it not better, because that I am more than common tall, that I had suit me all points like a man?' than all sadder thoughts disappear, to make room for the overflowing spirits of the woman. But we hear some one say, 'You are speaking of Rosalind, instead of the lady who enacted the part on Thursday night.' We beg to say it is one and the same thing. If ever we looked upon, heard, conceived Rosalind, it was upon that

occasion. If ever we listened to the playful wit, the sweet mockery, the merry laugh of Rosalind, if ever we saw her graceful form, her merry eye, her arched brows, her changing looks, it was then and there. Mrs. Nisbett's Rosalind was a pretty piece of acting, full of honey; Madame Vestris's Rosalind is all grace and poetry; Miss Helen Faucit's (by far the best of them all) is full of wit, mirth, and beauty. But Miss Cushman was Rosalind. Miss Cushman's features, if they are deficient in regular beauty, have that flexibility which makes every expression natural to them, and causes them to reflect each thought which passed through the author's brain as he drew the character. Never did we hear Shakspeare's language more perfectly enunciated. Not a syllable was lost, and each syllable was a note. The beauties of the author were as clear, as transparent, as though the thoughts themselves, instead of the words which are their vehicles, were transfused through the senses; eye, ear, heart, took them in, in that perfect form in which they were conceived. We may seem extravagant in our praise to those who have not seen Miss Cushman, not to those who have seen her."

It is useless to try to reconcile the opinions of the two sides of the Atlantic on the question of taste at that time. It is certain that what Charlotte Cushman lacked in the eyes of the Philistines she gained in the poetry that she certainly commanded by her rhythmical utterance and intelligent interpretation among those open to a higher influence than the merely physical.

The great and complete performances upon which fame will elect to establish the memory of Charlotte Cushman are *Romeo*, *Meg Merrilies*, and *Queen Katherine*. The play of "*Henry the Eighth*" is perhaps the simplest and most unconventional that Shakspeare wrote. It was his last work, according to recent opinion, and the prologue commends it to those that love simple and untheatric truth; the play abounding, moreover, in dramatic story, furnishing at least two complete dramas, and shadowing forth the tragedy of *Anne Bullen*. Charlotte Cushman's artistic sense required finality of effect, so that we find that she, as in other plays where it was necessary, arranged certain scenes with a view to the right proportions. In this case the death scene became of importance in appropriating the piece to *Katherine*. She restored to the acting version the parts that

had been lacking. The impression conveyed by casual critics is misleading that puts Charlotte Cushman's peculiar merit in outbursts of passion and the like. She had great power there undoubtedly, but consistency of conception and of performance was the controlling characteristic. Katherine was a gentle but queenly character, rising to heights of virtuous indignation, suffering and defensive. It is, as the prologue would have us believe, anything but theatric; and in this spirit she played it. Mr. Ball describes her calm dignity in the first scene where she listens to the two cardinals, giving respectful hearing to the one, listening to and hardly heeding the other, with a half contemptuous sneer, and at the conclusion drawing herself to her extreme height, turning round so as to face Wolsey, with flashing eye and extended arms, with majesty:

"Lord Cardinal, to you I speak."

There was no clap-trap in it, and the effect was electrical. He praises the first scene of the third act with the cardinals, and recalls the pathos of the death scene. The death was, as already indicated, the device of her own art. The audience was prepared for the end, and all sympathies were gathered for the parting of

the blameless and tried spirit. Of course, all this was done without any abuse of the text.

The London *Times* said of her performance: "It is in the celebrated dying scene in the 4th act that she chiefly devotes all her care and her energies. Some actresses have made the trial scene the grand feature of the piece; but this, to have its full effect, requires rather more physical strength than is exhibited by Miss Cushman. In the decline of physical strength, as represented when the unfortunate queen dies amid her few faithful attendants, the actress has lavished all that accurate detail which so powerfully belongs to her system of interpretation. The broken up attitude of that ghastly figure in the chair, the benignant smile that seems ever ready to vanish away in death, the flush of banished pride at the unmannerly entrance of the messenger, the manner in which the queen hears the virtues of her old enemy extolled—receiving pleasure from the honest defense, though to hear it requires powerful strain of the attention—the look of approaching beatitude in sleep, when she is cheered by a celestial vision, are so many *nuances*, all truthful to the last degree, and each put in its right place. The whole scene is a refined

specimen of histrionic poetry, which, transferred to a canvas, would serve as a Pre-Raphaelite picture of a dying saint."

The *Times* commended the intellect that could dive into hidden meanings and find the most fitting expression, not to be risked by the ordinary actress. The disease, it was objected, was something too real, "but unexceptionably beautiful was the first scene," where she spoke in the cause of Buckingham against Wolsey; majesty and goodness were blended: "There is such an air of downright goodness about the appearance of Katherine, and the Southern acuteness with which she darts searching glances at the cardinal is tempered by so much gentleness, that a finer bearing of gentility cannot be conceived."

One needs but to turn to the final words of Katherine to conceive how the actress gave the fullest meaning to each sentence by her treatment of the scene as one of farewell to all her sorrows. The remembrance of her child lights up the dying face for a moment, the joy of possession lost; and charitable thought follows in each fleeting breath, as she consigns her memory to the world as a chaste wife and herself to the grave:

Although uncrowned, yet like
A queen, and daughter to a king.

No description of posture, no dwelling on the pathos of voice, can supply to the imagination that which the reader of this record can gather for himself from the personal attributes of Charlotte Cushman, and a connotation of the written play.

Miss Cushman's *Lady Macbeth*, unlike her other principal characters, was an approach to the old style of acting; she followed tradition to some extent, and presented many features of that high school that may be said to have closed with her in the female line of descent. The distinctive merits and points of her performance must accordingly constitute the record in this case. To say that she was driven with a fiery ambition, that she was fierce at times, gracious, bold, then faltering and then remorseful, would be but to follow the play. She did not copy the Siddons tradition, for that great actress conceived that *Lady Macbeth* was a person of great beauty and essentially feminine. Charlotte Cushman represented her as a woman of infinite pride, who, for example, met Duncan as an equal and not with the usual sense of guilty intent veiled in a cringing cour-

tesy. The whole action had the air of a woman firm in a purpose based on imagined right and destiny. She loved and admired her husband, and after she read the letter in the first act she placed it in her bosom. Shakespeare, it may be assumed on artistic grounds, did not intend to make a monster of Lady Macbeth; she was led to guilt by the cogging message of the spirits, and when she repeated the words of her husband and uttered the monosyllable—"Air?"—one could see that she was enmeshed—the scene of the blasted heath came again to view and we saw the witches vanish—as some one has aptly written, their supernatural character then for the first time was felt by the audience. She grew in this character with the years, and no doubt her first performances of it were crude. A writer in the *Nation* says that her performance of it with "Hamblin at the National" was a failure; yet the English audience that first saw her in it recognized from the beginning that she grasped the character. The *Times* comments on her boldness and zeal in urging on her husband, her expression of the sense of disaster and fate in the sleep-walking scene, confessing the penalty that she was too proud else to do. She played the part

like a noble nature, or at least like one nobly born; thus the fevered show of ease, so gracious and so evidently assumed at the banquet on the appearance of the ghost of Banquo, which was unseen by her, were the manners of a woman equal to the dignities that she sought. Charlotte Cushman's methods of expression, as said, in this performance, were of the old school to a certain extent. The deep suspiration, the hoarse whisper, the stride, the quick dashes of movement, the contracted brow, and the management of the eye were of this kind—but she was never else than natural. No woman ever taught the lesson of the play more forcibly than Charlotte Cushman; the impression of reality was her singular gift. "Even handkerchiefs were waved from the boxes," is the London record when she played the part with Macready.

Bianca, in Milman's "Fazio," is notable as the character in which she gained her first triumph in England. The play is of an outworn type, the scene laid in Italy, as in nearly all of the later imitations of the blank verse school. Fazio, an alchemist, gets possession of the riches of an old miser who staggers into his rooms about to die from the fatal wounds

inflicted by his assailants; it is believed that Fazio has discovered the secret of making gold out of the baser metals; he lives in splendor, and falls into the toils of Aldabella; the jealousy of Bianca, his wife, is aroused, and she denounces him, hoping for love and the old poverty; Fazio is condemned to die—and the agony of her fatal error constitutes the tragedy. A memorable moment in the acting was the sudden discovery of Fazio's infatuation: "Fazio, thou hast seen Aldabella!" The scene of well meant denunciation and the unexpected sentence of death was the one that caused the London audience to grow wild with enthusiasm. Miss Cushman had thrown such energy into this critical moment that she almost dropped in a faint in the wings, and had to be supported to the footlights to answer the call. The tragic finality of all her performances was always artistic and picturesque. As Bianca she hears the farewell and forgiving words of Fazio in a stupor, stands rigid as the bell sounds its note of death, and falls like some stricken thing; and when she is borne away it is as one who walks in a dream.

The *Times* said: "The great characteristics of Miss Cushman are her earnestness, her in-

tensity, her quick apprehension of readings, her power to dart from emotion to emotion with the greatest rapidity, as if carried by impulse alone. The early part of the play affords an audience no criterion of what an actress can do; but from the instant where she suspects that her husband's affections are wavering, and with a flash of horrible enlightenment exclaims, 'Fazio, thou hast seen Aldabella!' Miss Cushman's career was certain. The variety which she threw into the dialogue with her husband—from jealousy dropping back into tenderness, from hate passing to love, while she gave an equal intensity to each successive passion as if her whole soul were for the moment absorbed in that only—was astonishing, and yet she always seemed to feel as if she had not done enough. Her utterance was more and more earnest, more and more rapid, as if she hoped the very force of the words would give her an impetus. The crowning effort was the supplication to Aldabella, when the wife falling, makes the greatest sacrifice of her pride to save the man she has destroyed. Nothing could exceed the determination with which, lifting her clasped hands, she urged her suit—making offer after offer to her proud

rival, as if she could not give too much, and feared to reflect on the value of her concessions—till at last repelled by the cold marchioness, and exhausted by her own passion, she sank huddled into a heap at her feet. Of the whole afterpart of the drama, which was distinguished throughout by sustained energy, this was her greatest triumph. We need hardly say that Miss Cushman is likely to prove a great acquisition to the London stage. For passion, real, irresistible passion, she has not at present her superior."

The *London Herald* remarked: "Her tenderness is beautifully energetic and impassioned, while violence, such as when her sentiment of jealousy suddenly crosses her, is broad and overwhelming, but at the same time not overdone."

Vandenhof, a conventional and artistic actor, but opinionative, and somewhat resentful of Charlotte Cushman's genius, says: "I never admired her Lady Macbeth. It is too animal; it wants intellectual confidence, and relies too much on physical energy. Besides she bullies Macbeth; gets him into a corner of the stage, and as I once heard a man with more force than elegance express it—'she pitches into

him;' in fact, as one sees her large, clenched hand and muscular arm in alarming proximity, one feels that if other arguments fail with her husband, she will have recourse to blows."

The Illustrated London News, in speaking of the performance of "Othello," with Forrest, said: "The chief attraction of the evening was certainly Miss Cushman's Emilia—a character which we never saw played in a finer manner than on Monday. The talented lady's performance fully warranted the opinion we formed of her last week. It was thoroughly impressive, natural, intelligent, and every point of excellence was warmly recognized by the audience. With the same absence of any straining after effect which we noticed in her previous acting in 'Fazio,' her energy at times completely carried the audience with her."

Miss Cushman's Mrs. Haller was superior to the lachrymose performances of the part that were common. The play of "The Stranger," was an elemental and epoch-making piece. Transplanted from the German, in altered form, its potentiality for tears was first demonstrated by Mrs. Siddons. It was the forerunner of "East Lynne" and "Miss Multon."

Miss Jewsbury substantially and sufficiently exalts our actress's merit in this part in these lines: "I remember her Mrs. Haller very well. She seemed to absorb and consume all the false sentiment in the play, and to elicit only the *real* suffering of the character, and the tragical truth *that nothing can undo ill deeds once done*. It was, I think, the character in which she most impressed me."

As to Emilia, with Forrest, the *Times* said: "Raising the character from one of merely subordinate interest to a prominence unknown for years. All the violent addresses were delivered earnestly and suddenly, as if dictated by a rude sense of right, and all told with indubitable effect on the audience. It was a nature indignant at wrong and treachery, that poured forth the torrents of wrath reckless of consequences. The appeal to heaven when she fell on one knee and raised her clasped hands with an air of intense confidence, was electrical—one of those effective 'hits' that are rare at the present day. If Miss Cushman goes on as she has begun she may create an epoch."

Unquestionably the world and history are too much disposed to regard genius and beauty

as alone entitled to record and praise. That would be a delightful book that would take up the wonderful performances of the forgotten contingent of the profession. There is perhaps no actor who has not been excelled in some part by some unremembered and humble artist. There are innumerable subordinate characters that we should take account of. People like old Tom Meade, who was long with Irving; Mrs. Stirling, that wonderful old nurse of Juliet; Cibber's Ancient Pistol, Placide's Grandfather Whitehead, and scores and scores of other really memorable things, should have some mention. It is more than likely that Mrs. Richardson was more pleasing than Charlotte in certain minor parts. Very likely her own Smike was inferior to her own Nancy.

Ball thought her unsurpassed in some of the dignified scenes as Juliana; and so in some of the lines of Portia, while Beatrice was heavy. We may well afford to pass by her Julie de Mortimer, Lady Gay Spanker, and whatever else one may choose to disregard as inessential to her fame. Several writers have recalled a moment in Knowles's "Love," where the countess declares her love, as exquisitely done, the sudden avowal and the blushing face hid



in the hand. Mr. Bell says that her Queen Gertrude was the finest he ever saw, while her Emilia was wonderful, her looks of scorn at Iago the sublimity of acting, and the death scene tender and pathetic. He preferred her Mrs. Haller to that of Mrs. Kean's: "I have known ladies to be removed from the theatre in hysterics, and have seen strong-minded men weeping like children," the tears also on her cheeks. He also records that she played Morgiana at Boston in 1837, in "The Forty Thieves," and that "her songs and duets with Ganem were warmly received, while her dancing was well worth seeing." She also played Madge Wildfire in this engagement.

Ireland cites as among her best Catherine of Sweden in the little play of "The Two Queens," Katherine the Shrew, Emilia, Elvira, Helen MacGregor and Alicia. In burlettas he remembers with more pleasure Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Hunt—the present Mrs. John Drew; and says that Mrs. Skerrett was far preferable in "Aladdin;" very likely, although the last named excellent actress had lost her lamp when seen by this chronicler.

The English writer already quoted, who saw her at the Park, says:

"Sometimes the intensity with which her acting affected me also vexed me. 'The Stranger' and 'Fazio' are both plays that I could never see for their own sakes; but I have been so moved by Miss Cushman's Mrs. Haller and Bianca, that I have gone home ill from the effect of the acting. I was unutterably ashamed of myself to be so prostrated by compositions of such spasmodic melodrama and such maudlin sentimentalism; but the artist created the tragedy in her own person, and that which was frigid in the book became pathetic in the woman. The same was the case with Mrs. Siddons; some of her most overpowering acting was in very inferior plays."

Thisbe, in "The Actress of Padua," was one of the famous parts of Rachel in a play by Victor Hugo, called "Angelo." It was unsuited to Charlotte Cushman, and the feverish play has not held its own on the boards. "Janet Pride" was a poor composite melodrama by Boucicault, first produced by Burton at his Chambers street house. Mrs. Simpson and other parts which she played with comic force, are familiar to the student of the stage. It is not necessary to go further into the list.

CHAPTER IX.

CLOSING YEARS OF SERVICE—READINGS —FAREWELL PERFORMANCES.

MISS Cushman's wish and purpose, in her later years, was to give up the hard work of acting, with its vexations of constant rehearsals and uncertain support, with its complex causes of disquiet, and to confine herself to readings. She was successful in the highest degree in the expression of literary niceties and dramatic force. Very few actresses have been capable of adding a like achievement to the record of their acting. Fanny Kemble, a very remarkable woman herself, is one of the very few to share with her this distinction. It is certain that Mrs. Siddons could not have compassed the range from the highly dramatic to the purely lyric, from the emotional to the humorous, from the heroic to the technical in elocution, that Miss Cushman surmounted with ease in her readings. At this time there are many actresses who are not trained in elocution—that elocution that was an integral part of

the sentiment and effectiveness of the older verse, and who could not read in public acceptably or even fairly well. Half a century ago or less, elocution was the bane as well as the special charge of the profession. But at any time, and at any period, the perfect art has been uncommon—melody, precision and natural expression not always being united. To be equally good in the artistic treatment of the poetic, and the use of the prose of the comedies of real life, is rare.

Charlotte had traversed the whole field of dramatic art. She gave such toil to the mastery of the technicalities of the pianoforte and of song, that at the bound she was equal to the position of prima donna. She sang and played, and, as in the "Naid Queen," we might say, danced in every form of drama and afterpiece. She understood the technique of her art as few other women as great have understood it. Many have been as well trained, but few have united such technique with such natural powers.

The variety in the readings of Miss Cushman demonstrated the versatility of genius: "The Lady of Shallot," "Henry VIII.," "A Man's a Man for A' That," Tennyson's "Grand-

mother," "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Battle of Ivry," "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "Horatius," and many other choice things from Tennyson, Browning, Macaulay, Burns and poets of diverse spirit. There was no trace of the tragedy queen in the lighter pieces. She put her stamp on everything, and incidentally made the reputation of a number of writers, calling attention to Carleton's "Betsy and I Are Out," to Miss Woolson with her "Kentucky Belle." She read dialect poems as well as she did those of artistic rhythm; she brought character into dialogue; her natural methods were equal to the simplest things, and her notes were as true in giving the prattle of a child, as in the trumpet voice of some exalted battle-piece. While she included many scenes from the plays that belonged to her fame, she made her career as a reader quite distinct. At all points the evidence of the genuineness of her power is complete.

There are some great stage reputations that may be questioned. We may suspect that the methods of certain famous actors were not natural, but vicious, and applauded by a vicious taste, the parts played by them not affording the disproof. In the case of Charlotte Cushman

every test was applied. The actress that played Nancy Sykes to the life, in a gingham apron and with all the manners and intonations of speech of the class, was necessarily an observant artist. The actress who played the Julias and the Juliets with such delicacy and warmth of sentiment; who measured her powers with Cardinal Wolsey as readily as she did with Lady Macbeth, who, in short, played so many parts—comedy and tragedy, prose and verse—with equal genius, was not a merely conventional person. She was necessarily a woman of great heart, wide sympathies, swift and sure analysis, gifted alike with common sense and uncommon sense. Everything that she did was natural, as she conceived it, for here and there we find adverse comment, as from Vandenhoff as to Lady Macbeth, or to her Helen in "The Hunchback" as Ireland has it. In the matter of her common sense in art we have this interesting statement from Henry Irving: "This lesson was enjoined on me when I was a very young man, by that remarkable actress, Charlotte Cushman. I remember that when she played Meg Merrilies I was cast for Henry Bertram, on the principle seemingly that an

actor with no singing voice is admirably fitted for a singing part. It was my duty to give Meg Merrilies a piece of money, and I did it after the traditional fashion of handing her a large purse full of the coin of the realm, in the shape of broken crockery, which was generally used in financial transactions on the stage, because when the virtuous maiden rejected with scorn the advances of the lordly libertine, and threw her pernicious bribe upon the ground, the clatter of the broken crockery suggested fabulous wealth. But after the play, Miss Cushman, in the course of some kindly advice, said to me: 'Instead of giving me that purse, don't you think it would have been much more natural if you had taken a number of coins from your pocket and given me the smallest? That is the way we give alms to a beggar, and it would have added greatly to the realism of the scene.' I have never forgotten that lesson, for simple as it was it contained many elements of dramatic truth."

The farewell night at Booth's Theatre was November 7, 1874, the character, Lady Macbeth. The audience was of the most brilliant description. When the curtain was lifted after the performance, the stage was seen to be

crowded with notable and representative men. William Cullen Bryant, the chief figure, was there to present to her, from the Arcadian Club, a crown of laurel. He did this in feeling words, the ceremony having been preceded by the recitation of an ode written by the poet Stoddard. Miss Cushman's reply to these honors was as follows: "Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but I thank you. Gentlemen, the heart has no speech; its only language is a tear or a pressure of the hand, and words very feebly convey or interpret its emotions. Yet I would beg you to believe that in the three little words that I now speak, 'I thank you,' there are heart-depths which I should fail to express better, though I should use a thousand other words.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for the honor you have offered me. I thank you, not only for myself, but for the whole profession, to which, through and by me, you have paid this very graceful compliment. If the few words I am about to say savor of egotism or vainglory, you will, I am sure, pardon me, inasmuch I am here only to speak of myself. You seem to compliment me upon an honorable life. As I look back upon that life, it seems to me that it

would have been impossible for me to have led any other. In this, I have, perhaps, been mercifully helped more than are many of my more beautiful sisters in art. I was, by a press of circumstances, thrown at an early age into a profession for which I had received no special education or training; but I had already, though so young, been brought face to face with necessity. I found life sadly real and intensely earnest, and in my ignorance of other ways of study, I resolved to take therefrom my text and my watchword. To be thoroughly *in earnest*, intensely in earnest in all my thoughts and in all my actions, whether in my profession or out of it, became my single idea. "And I honestly believe herein lies the secret of my success in life. I do not believe any great success in any art can be achieved without it.

"I say this to the beginners in my profession, and I am sure all the associates in my art, who have honored me with their presence on this occasion, will indorse what I say in this. Art is an absolute mistress; she will not be coquetted with or slighted; she requires the most entire self-devotion, and she repays with grand triumphs."

After other words of general and special thanks, Miss Cushman added: "To my public—what shall I say? From the depths of my heart I thank you, who have given me always consideration, encouragement, and patience; who have been ever my comfort, my support, my main help. I do not now say farewell to you in the usual sense of the word. In making my final representation on the mimic scene in the various cities of the country, I have reserved to myself the right of meeting you again where you have made me believe that I give you pleasure which I receive myself at the same time, at the reading desk. To you, then, I say, may you *fare* well and may I *fare* well, until at no distant day we meet—there. Meanwhile, good, kind friends, good-night, and God be with you."

The public ovation that followed is without precedent in our dramatic history. No managerial effort or provision could have assembled the mass of 25,000 people that crowded the street leading to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where she had her quarters, and which filled Madison Square with the clamor of hearty God-speed. A serenade had been arranged for her on her arrival at the hotel, and she was compelled to

appear on the balcony to gratify the public. In spite of her protest her progress from the theatre had been accompanied by a torch-light procession and a display of fireworks.

November 14, 1874, a similar scene of farewell, after a performance of *Lady Macbeth*, took place at the Academy in Philadelphia, although on this occasion she evaded a participation in the pyrotechnical part of it. She gave readings in Trenton, Baltimore, and Washington; was taken sick while on tour, at Cincinnati, and had to abandon the trip to California. Still in a condition of pain she continued to read at various points, and even acted at Chicago, and in February and in March in St. Louis. Her farewell to her Boston public took place May 15, 1875, in the part of *Lady Macbeth*. The occasion was marked by addresses and a memorial gift from representative citizens, and a few words of farewell from her.

The finest period of Charlotte Cushman's genius was in her old age. She brought to her later performances the same spiritual vitality that communicated enthusiasm to her audiences when in her brilliant youth she played *Romeo* and *Bianca*. What a tremendous concentration of power there was in her *Queen Katherine*!

what bursts of energy in her Lady Macbeth! Vandenhoff did not like her stern energy in the latter character, but there was a wholeness about all she did. She fully realized the weakness that culminated in pitiless ruin. There were little denotements here and there of the conscience in abeyance, as when she reluctantly extended her hand to Duncan. There was meaning in all that she did. The scenes of traditional power were given with energy, but the lesson of the drama was communicated with pathetic tenderness in the closing moments. The special merit of all her work was cogency of moral effect. A labor of love was the performance of Queen Katherine. If Griffith were a faithful chronicler the unhappy queen had a loving friend of her memory in this queen of the stage. Her sympathies so strongly possessed her that the light of it shone in her face like an after-glow of the soul when she had retired from the stage, as Miss Stebbins records. The reader need only refer to the great scene in "Henry the Eighth."

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST DAYS; SUMMARY.

AFTER the farewell in Boston, Miss Cushman gave a few readings at points where existing arrangements demanded her compliance, but her strength was failing. She had set up a cottage at Newport and a smaller one at Lenox, hoping to have advantage from the alternate enjoyment of the air of the sea and of the mountains. Her use of the Newport cottage afforded her the enjoyment for a short while of domestic and friendly companionship; but in October she returned to Boston for the winter. At the Parker House she spent her last days. She was under constant medical care. Her letters to her friends are full of heart, and not without hope; but she finally gave her attention to the possibilities of her approaching end. She purchased a plot in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, and gave explicit directions as to her funeral,

indicating those whom she wished to be her pallbearers. She died February 18, 1876.

It is proper, not as a matter of curiosity, but for its teachings, to dwell upon some of the details of Charlotte Cushman's will. Those who are indifferent to the lesson of her life have been, and may be still, inclined to regard her estate, vast as a reward of labor essentially intellectual, as a proof rather of hard dealings and a grasping desire for money. On the face of it, this is a misapprehension. In a practical way, first of all, it is conclusive of her power and genius as an actress; no carpings, raked up from forgottenness, can stand against it. Under the management of these days she would have left a million or more rather than \$600,000.

The disposition of this great fortune indicates the goodness of her good sense and heart. To Miss Stebbins, the friend of her Italian days, she gave \$1,500 a year; to her brother Charles the same sum; to two nieces in England \$750 each a year, to be increased to \$1,000 on their marriage—a beautiful benediction that, from her that had chosen the art-life; Sallie was cared for nobly—a house of her own in Philadelphia, \$750 a year, and the

privilege of living, when she chose, with the family in the home that had known her mistress at Newport. Other provisions were made for those near to her; and the residue of the estate was given to E. C. Cushman, her favorite nephew, of St. Louis.

In the latter days on the stage Miss Cushman was a constant sufferer, and had her physician in attendance. Indeed, she said to Mr. A. C. Wheeler that her physician "had told her that the work was needed to keep her mind diverted; and, then, there is a certain pleasure in pursuing a thing to the end." "I could not play *Meg Merrilies* if there were one more scene in the play," she said to another. When she played *Wolsey* in Philadelphia, she found the strain too great and gave it up forever. Mr. Frederick Warde, who played with her in her last engagement, says that, with all her patience, a moan would now and then escape her. Those that knew her best loved her best. She was as lavish as a princess in her kindness and hospitalities.

The true note of sympathy and respect was struck in many of the leading articles of the day that recorded her loss. It was untimely. She was not yet 60 when she died. Some of

her companion artists are even active at this day, notably Couldock, who came with her to America on her first return, and who was born two years earlier. Mrs. Maeder survives, charming in her old age. *The World* said of Miss Cushman's death: "Art has lost one of its truest artists, a loyal and gifted servant of the muses, whom, not one alone, but the whole choir of the sacred nine should this day mourn with unfeigned sorrow." *The Herald* said: "No one can fill the place that Charlotte Cushman has left vacant in dramatic art. She was an original force on the stage, and her power was different from that of any other artist in the memory of this generation. Neither Ristori, Madame Janauschek, nor even Rachel could equal her in her own realm of tragedy."

In summing up the career of Charlotte Cushman no words are more fitting than the farewell lines written by William Winter: "The greatness of Charlotte Cushman was that of an exceptional, because grand and striking personality, combined with extraordinary power to embody the highest ideals of majesty, pathos, and appalling anguish. She was not a great actress merely, but she was a great woman.

She did not possess the dramatic faculty apart from other faculties, and conquer by that alone; but having that faculty in almost unlimited fulness, she poured through its channel such resources of character, intellect, moral strength, soul and personal magnetism as marked her for a genius of the first order, while they made her an irresistible force in art. When she came upon the stage she filled it with the brilliant vitality of her presence. Every movement that she made was winningly characteristic. Her least gesture was eloquence. Her voice which was soft or silvery, or deep or mellow, according as emotion affected it, used now and then to tremble, and partly to break, with tears that were pathetic beyond description. These were denotements of the fiery soul that smouldered beneath her grave exterior, and gave iridescence to every form of art that she embodied. Sometimes her whole being seemed to become petrified in a silent suspense more thrilling than any action, as if her imagination were suddenly enthralled by the tumult of its vast perceptions. As an actress Miss Cushman was best in tragedy, whether lurid or pathetic, and in sombre melodrama. Theatrical history will probably asso-

ciate her name more intimately with Meg Merrilies than with any other character. This production was unique. The art method by which it was projected was peculiar in this, that it disregarded probability and addressed itself to the imaginative perception. Miss Cushman could give free rein to her frenzy in this character, and that was why she loved it and exulted in it, and was able by means of it to reveal herself so amply and distinctly to the public mind. What she thus revealed was a power of passionate emotion as swift as the lightning and wild as the gale—an individuality fraught with pathos, romance, tenderness, grandeur, the deep knowledge of grief, and the royal strength of endurance. Her Meg Merrilies was not her greatest work, but it was her most startling and effective one, because it was the sum and brilliant illumination of her being. In dealing with the conceptions of Shakspeare, Miss Cushman's spirit was the same, but her method was different. As Meg Merrilies, she obeyed the law of her own nature; as Queen Katherine, she obeyed the law of the poetic that encompassed her. In that stately, sweet, and pathetic character, and again, though to a less extent in the terrible yet tender character

of Lady Macbeth, both of which she apprehended through an intellect always clear and an imagination always adequate; the form and limitations prescribed by the dominant genius of the poet, were scrupulously observed. She made Shakspeare real, but she never dragged him down to the level of the actual. She knew the heights of that wondrous intuition and potent magnetism, and she lifted herself and her hearers to their grand and beautiful eminence. Her best achievements in the illustration of Shakspeare were accordingly of the highest order of art. They were at once human and poetic. They were white marble suffused with fire. They thrilled the heart with emotion and passion, and they filled the imagination with a thoroughly satisfactory sense of beauty, power, and completeness. They have made her illustrious. They have done much to assert the possible grandeur and beneficence of the stage and to confirm it in the affectionate esteem of thoughtful men and women. They remain now as rich legacy in the remembrance of this generation, and they will pass into history among the purest, highest, and most cherished works that genius has inspired and art has accomplished to adorn

an age of culture and to elevate the human mind."

But apart from the share of distinction and praise that belongs to the name of Charlotte Cushman, the lesson of her life is of special value to those who would seek a like career—teaching patience and industry, earnestness and intellectual striving, and the multiplied requirements for the highest success. In these aspects alone her name deserves to live for all time.

THE END.

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
"Abon Hassan"	25, 26, 28, 32, 34
Acting, The Right Theory of	<i>Preface</i>
Actors, Forgotten	160
"Actress of Padua"	66, 162
(For plays in general, see also characters.)	
Agnes, "Walder, the Avenger"	51
"Agnes de Vere"	26
Albany, Charlotte Cushman in	21
"Alexander the Great"	35
Alger, Life of Forrest	57
Alicia, "Jane Shore"	21, 23, 34
Alithea, "The Country Girl"	33
"All that Glitters is not Gold"	71
"Aladdin"	25, 26, 27, 29, 31
(For characters, see also plays.)	
Almaviva, "Marriage of Figaro"	12
Alvedsen, "Two Galley Slaves"	85
Amaranth, "Wild Oats"	27
American Actresses, Charlotte Cushman the	
first great one	<i>Preface</i>
Anderson, Mary, Dedication ; as Ion	128
"Angelo"	162
Angiolina, "Marino Fallero"	53
Astor Place Riot	48
"As You Like It"	62, 73, 130, 146

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Badeau.....	100
Ball, Mr., in Clement's Life.....	149, 160
"Banker's Wife, The".....	71
"Barber of Seville, The".....	13, 25
Barnes, Mrs., male characters.....	123
Barnes, Mr., in female character.....	129
Barrett, Lawrence.....	77
On Meg, etc.....	99
Bartley, Mrs., as Hamlet.....	123
Barton.....	14, 17, 57
Bateman Children, in male characters.....	126
Bede, Cuthbert.....	102
Beatrice, "Much Ado About Nothing".....	33, 53, 54, 75, 160
Beauty on the Stage.....	2
In Distress; triumphant.....	5
Bellino, Count, "Devil's Bridge".....	13, 23
Belvidera, "Venice Preserved".....	35
Bennett, James Gordon.....	49
Bertram, Lucy, "Guy Mannering".....	12, 83
Betty, "Clandestine Marriage".....	28
Beverly, Mrs., "The Gamester".....	33
Bianca, "Fazio".....	32, 60, 62, 73, 75, 154, 162
Blake.....	21, 26, 70, 72
Blanche, Lady, "Old Maids".....	48
Bob, "Tom and Jerry".....	34
Bonheur, Rosa.....	67
Booth.....	73, 77
Booth's Theatre.....	77, 167
"Borrowed Feathers".....	32
Boston.....	22
Bowers, Mrs.....	75
Braham.....	80
"Bridal, The".....	53

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
"Bride of Genoa"	25
"Brigand, The"	29
Broadway Theatre.....	71
Brough.....	29, 81
Brougham.....	52, 72
Brownings, The.....	68
"Brutus".....	29
Bryant, William Cullen.....	168
Buffalo.....	22
Burton.....	48, 50, 73
Caldwell.....	12
Carlyle, Jane Welsh.....	68
"Cataract of the Ganges".....	26
Cecilia, "Rural Felicity".....	28
Celeste, Madam, in male characters.....	127, 129
Charke, Mrs.....	122
"Charles XII.".....	25
Cherubino, "Marriage of Figaro".....	24, 29
Chippendale.....	26, 36
Mrs. Chippendale.....	24, 36, 79
Chorley.....	65
Christine, "The Two Queens"	25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33
Cibber.....	160
Cibber, Colley, Daughter.....	122
"Cinderella".....	13
Clarendon, Miss.....	47
Clapp, Henry.....	22
Clarke, Fanny and Rosetta.....	126
"Claudestine Marriage".....	28
Clement, Clara Erskine.....	116
Clifton, Lucy, "Fiend of the Eddystone".....	35
Clorinda, "Robin Hood".....	30, 31

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Clorinda, "Suspicious Husband".....	51
Constance, "Love Chase".....	25, 26, 28
Colman, Mr., plays Meg.....	102
Cook, Eliza.....	61, 68
Cordelia, "Lear".....	24
Couldock.....	70
"Coriolanus".....	32
Countess de Novara, "A Peculiar Position"....	24, 29
Crampton, Charlotte.....	120
Creswick.....	33, 34
Criticism, Early.....	37
Cushman, Charlotte; (for characters, see general index); the first great American actress; compared with Mrs. Siddons: the lesson of her life.....	<i>Preface</i>
Lacking in beauty.....	6
Descended from the Puritans.....	6
Vicissitudes of the family.....	9
Expected to become a singer and teacher.....	9
Sees Macready in her childhood.....	10
Instructed by Paddon, engaged to sing with the Woods.....	11
Goes to New Orleans with the Maeders as prima donna.....	12
Having made her début in Boston as Alma- viva and Lucy Bertram.....	12
Dramatic début as Lady Macbeth.....	14
Industry.....	19
Returns to New York.....	20
Appears at the Bowery.....	21
Plays at Albany.....	21
Death of favorite brother.....	42
Acts male characters.....	21
Appears at the National.....	22

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Begins engagement at the Park.....	24
Plays with Forrest.....	24
Retires from the Park.....	34
Her position there.....	35
The National.....	37
Earns the title of "Our Charlotte".....	38
Plays with Macready.....	41
Brings family to New York.....	41
Lively disposition in youth.....	43
Love of social distinction.....	43
Personal appearance.....	45
Trains her sister.....	45
Force of character.....	45
Trouble with an editor.....	47
Hostility toward her.....	48
At Burton's, Philadelphia.....	48
Hackett's remark on her force of character...	49
Plays in "Naiad Queen," and returns to the Park	50
At Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia.....	51
Acts with Macready.....	53
He tells her to come to England.....	54
Her energy.....	53
Sails for England.....	55
Doubts on arrival.....	56
Engaged by Maddox.....	58
Appears triumphantly as Bianca.....	60
Attention from the distinguished.....	61
Produces "Romeo and Juliet" at the Hay- market.....	64
Returns to America.....	65
Again in England.....	66
Private life.....	66
Makes many friends.....	68

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Visits Rome.....	68
America	70
Wishes to retire.....	71
Crowds to see her in New York.....	73
Home in Italy.....	73
Her returns to the stage; work a part of her nature	74
Winter Garden.....	75
Interest in the War	76
The Sanitary Fund.....	77
Mistakes as to her Meg Merrilies.....	79
Had no mannerisms.....	118
Male characters in general.....	119
Readings.....	163
Farewell night at Booth's Theatre.....	167
Final performances....	171
Last days.....	173
Her death, her will.....	174
Her patient suffering and love of her art....	175
The lesson of her life.....	180
Cushman, Susan, beautiful.....6; 31, 32, 33, 34	45
Trained by her sister.....	47
Defended by.....	45
The story of her life.....	64
Appears as Juliet at the Haymarket.....	67
Marries Mr. Muspratt	69
Dies.....	6
Cushman, Robert, ancestor, Puritan, preaches the first sermon to be printed in America....	9
Cushman's, Charlotte, father and mother.....	69
Mother dies.....	27
"Damon and Pythias".....	32, 33, 34
"Dancing Barber".....	

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Darnley, Lady, "West End"	51
Davenport, E. L.	72
Davenport, Miss Jean, in male characters	125
Davidge.	76
Denin, The Sisters.	73, 126
Detroit.	22
"Devil's Bridge, The"	13, 23
Dorothy, "No Song, No Supper"	24
Dramatic Fund Benefit.	77
Drew, Mrs., in male characters	125
"Duchess Elinor, The"	65
"Dumb Belle"	28, 34
Earnestness, Charlotte Cushman's watchword	169
Eliza, "Dumb Belle"	28, 34
Elizabeth, Queen, "Richard III."	26, 31, 34
Elvira, "Pizarro"	22, 23, 30, 52
Emilia, "Othello"	32, 33, 40, 62, 158, 159, 161
Emily, "Sam Weller"	26
Emma, "William Tell"	25, 30
Elspy, the Witch, "Captain Kyd"	31, 32
Empress, The, "Love"	33
Euphemia, "Siege of Rochelle"	27
Eugenia, "Free and Easy"	28
Eudiga, "Charles XII."	25, 26, 28, 29, 31
Evadne, "The Bridal"	53
Fairman, George, "The Liberty Tree"	35
Falcone, Fortunato.	22
Farren, Mrs.	126
Faucit, Helen.	57, 147, etc.
"Fazio"	60, 62, 65, 73, 154
Ferris, G. T.	55
"Fiend, The, of Eddystone"	35
Fisher Clara (Mrs. Maeder) youthful genius of, 11, 124	

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Fitzherbert, Count, "The Married Rake".....	27, 28
Fitzwilliam, Mrs.	33, 127
Floranthe, "The Mountaineers"	30
Floribel, "The Wife"	28
Flynn, Mrs.	23, 127
Ford, Mrs., "The Merry Wives of Windsor" ..	29
Forrest	24, 25, 27, 38, 48, 57, 59, 60, 63
Fredericks	36
"Free and Easy"	28
 Gadfly, Edwin and Gossamer, "The Twin Brothers"	 28, 29
"Galley Slaves, The Two"	35
"Gamester, The"	33
Gaylove, Grace, "The Review, or, The Wags of Windsor"	 31
Germon, Henry, "The Hut of the Red Hunter" ..	35
"Genoese, The"	31
Gilbert, John	72
Glenroy, The Hon. Mrs., "Town and Country" ..	51
Glover, Mrs., as Falstaff	122
Goneril, "Lear"	24, 25, 27, 29, 34, 38
Grazie, Marie, "The Brigand"	29
Greenwood, Grace	68
"Greville Cross"	35
Gurner, Mrs.	35
"Guy Mannering"	12, 23, 29, 32, 35, 38, 63
Synopsis and scenes of	84-98
 Hackett	 29, 34, 39, 49
Haller, Mrs., "The Stranger" ..	21, 62, 63, 65, 66, 71, 75, 158, 159
Comments on	161, 162
Hamblin	20, 30

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Kelly, Miss, as Romeo.....	124
Kembles, The.....	39
Fanny Kemble.....	128, 163
"King, The, and the Freebooter".....	30
Kitty, "Ways and Means".....	31, 34
"Knight of the Golden Fleece, The".....	24
Knowles, Sheridan, on Charlotte's Romeo.....	131
"Kyd, Captain".....	31
"Lady of Lyons".....	27, 28, 29, 143
"Lafitte".....	30
Lane, Miss Louise, as Romeo, &c.....	125, 126
Lathrop.....	68
"Laugh When You Can".....	30
Laura, "Bride of Genoa".....	25
"Lear".....	24
"Liberty Tree, The, or Boston Boys in 1773"....	35
Lionel Lynx, Mrs., "Married Life".....	35
Logan, Eliza.....	126
"London Assurance".....	47, 51, 71, 72
Longfellow.....	54
Louise, "Norman Leslie".....	35
Lucy Clifton, "The Fiend of Eddystone".....	35
"Love".....	33, 160
"Love Chase".....	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 38
Lydia, "Agnes De Vere".....	26
Macbeth, Lady, "Macbeth".....	14, 22, 23, 33, 34, 40, 62, 63, 71, 73, 77, 152, 157, 167, 179
MacGregor, Helen, "Rob Roy".....	21, 23, 28, 33, 34
Macready.....	10, 39, 41, 48, 52, 53, 54, 56, 65, 121, 127
Maddox.....	57
Maeders, The.....	11, 16, 124, 176
"Maid of Orleans, The".....	32

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
"Hut, The, of the Red Hunter"	35
Hutton, Laurence, opinions of	139, 140
"Infatuation"	63
Ion, "Ion"	64, 128, 127
Ireland	34
On Charlotte Cushman's characters	161
"Irish Ambassador"	28
Irving, H.	166
Isabella, "Irish Ambassador"	28
Isabella, "Revenge"	33
Isabella, "Isabella, or, a Woman's Life"	34
Janauschek	130, 176
"Jane Shore"	21, 23, &c.
"Janet Pride"	162
Jarman, Mrs.	127
Jarrett, H. C.	77
Jeannie, Deans, "Heart of Midlothian"	33
Jewsbury, Miss	68, 99, 145, 159
Johnson, S. D.	76
Joan, "Maid of Orleans"	32
Jordan, Mrs.	122
Julia, "The Hunchback"	35, 63, 71, 145
Julia, "The Rival Pages"	25
Juliana, "The Honeymoon"	63, 71, 73, 75, 76, 160
Kate, "My Sister Kate"	34
Kate, "Tom and Jerry"	33
Katherine, Queen, "Henry VIII." 65, 66, 71, 72,	75, 77, 143
Comments on	178
Katherine, "Katherine and Petruchio" ..	33, 34, 76
Kean, Charles	34, 39

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Hamlet.....	121, 123
Mrs. Shaw as	25
Mrs. Bartley as	123
Mrs. Barnes as.....	123
Mrs. Siddons as.....	121
Queen in "Hamlet"	23, 34, 161
Miss Cushman appeared at Brougham's Lyceum November 24, 1851, as Hamlet, having played Meg, Mrs. Haller, La Tisbe, etc., at the Broadway, and the Astor Place Opera House.	
Haymarket, The.....	64, 66
"Heart of Midlothian, The"	33
Helen, "The Hunchback".....	26, 27, 32, 33
Helena, "The Hunter of the Alps".....	28, 33
Henry, Mrs., as William in "Black-eyed Susan,"	129
Henry, "Speed the Plough".....	22
"Henry IV.".....	29
"Henry VIII."	65, 148
Hermione, "Damon and Pythias".....	27
Hero, "Woman's Wit"	28
Heron, Matilda.....	76
Hield.....	31
Hill	24
Hilson plays a female character.....	129
Hodgkinson.....	19
"Honeymoon, The".....	63, 71, 73, 75
Horner, Jack, "Greville Cross"	35
Hosmer, Harriet.....	68
Houghton, Lord	68
Hughes, Mrs.....	36
Hugo	162
"Hunchback, The".....	35, 63, 71, 145
"Hunter of the Alps, The".....	28

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Malfort, Mrs., "The Soldier's Daughter".....	33
Malibran as Romeo.....	123
Margaret, "Maid of Burgundy".....	35
Margaret, "Tom Noddy's Secret".....	30
Margaret, "The King and the Freebooter"....	30
"Married Life".....	35
"Married Rake, The".....	27, 28, 34
Marian Mayley, "What Will the World Say?"..	51
Mariana, "The Wife".....	63
"Marriage of Figaro, The".....	12
"Marino Faliero".....	53
Marshall, E. A.....	51, 52, 70
"Mary Stuart".....	33, 34
Mason.....	36
Mary, "All that Glitters is not Gold".....	71
Mary Wilson, "The Strange Gentlemen".....	24
Mary, "Tom Noddy's Secret".....	30, 31, 32
Meade, Tom.....	160
Meg Merrilies, "Guy Mannering" 23, 29, 63,	65, 71, 73, 75, 76, 77, 79, 82
Morley on.....	98
Vandenhoff, Barrett.....	99
Badeau.....	100
Cuthbert Bede.....	102
London Times; Winter.....	100, 173
Melnotte, Claude.....	28, 31, 143
Widow.....	27, 28
"Merchant of Venice".....	22, 63
"Merry Wives of Windsor".....	29, 34
Mestayer, Emily.....	126
"Metamora".....	25, 62
"Midsummer Night's Dream".....	51
Morgiana.....	22
Minx, Mrs., "Mr. Goldfinch".....	30

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Montaldo, "The Genoese".....	31
Morley.....	98
Mortimer, Mrs., "Laugh When You Can".....	30
Motley.....	68
Mowatt, Mrs., male characters.....	127
Murdoch.....	15, 22, 27
"Naiad Queen, The".....	50
Nahmeokee, "Metamora".....	25, 27
National Theatre.....	23, 37, 50
Neafie.....	26, 27
"Neighbor's Wife, My".....	25
Neilson, Adelaide.....	3
Niblo's.....	72
"Nicholas Nickleby".....	29
Nisbett, Mrs.....	147
"Norman Leslie".....	35
Oberon, "Midsummer Night's Dream".....	51
"Old Maids".....	48
"Oliver Twist".....	38, 75
Synopsis with scenes.....	105-116
Ophelia, "Hamlet".....	34
"Othello".....	40, 62
Paddon, John.....	11, 13
Page, Mrs., "Merry Wives of Windsor".....	34
"Pages, The Rival".....	25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33
Palmer, Mrs. A. M., production of "As You Like It" by Women.....	130
"Patrician and Parvenu".....	25
Patrick, "The Poor Soldier".....	13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 34
Park Theatre.....	24, 34
Salaries at, &c.....	36, 51

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Parkman, Theodore.....	68
Paul, "The Pet of the Petticoats".....	25, 27, 29, 32, 33
Pauline, "The Lady of Lyons".....	34
"Peculiar Position, A".....	24, 31, &c.
Pelby, Mrs., boy's parts.....	123
Percy, Lady, "Henry IV.".....	29, 34
"Pizarro".....	30
Placide.....	28, 29, 31, 36, 72
"Pocahontas".....	26
"Pompeii, Last Days of".....	30
"Poor Gentleman, The".....	51
"Poor Soldier, The".....	13, 15, 21, 23, 24
Portia, "Merchant of Venice".....	22, 29, 33, 63, 160
Powell, Mrs.....	10, 123
Power.....	28
Price, Stephen.....	39
Princess's Theatre.....	131
"Provoked Husband, The".....	66
 "Queens, The Two".....	 25
 Rachel.....	 176
Rees.....	14
"Revenge, The".....	33
"Review, The, or, The Wags of Windsor".....	31
Reeves, Sims.....	66
"Richard II.".....	34
Richardson, Mrs.....	24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 36
Male characters.....	127, 160
Richings.....	28, 29, 31, 36
Rivers, Ellen, "Patrician and Parvenu".....	25, 26, 27, 29, 30
"Robin Hood".....	30, 31
Ristori.....	68, 176

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
"Rob Roy"	13, 23, 26
Robertson, Agnes, male characters	127
Rogers	61
Rolfe, John, "Pocahontas"	26
Romeo, 23, 29, 64, 66, 71, 72, 75, 120, 121, 123, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131	
Comments on Charlotte Cushman's	131-143
Rosamond, "Borrowed Feathers"	32
Rosalind, "As You Like It"	62, 63, 71
Comments on, compared with Nisbét, Vestris and Faucit	146, 147
"Rural Felicity"	28
Ryder	56
Saga, "The Last Days of Pompeii"	30, 31
Sally, the maid	55, 174
Sand, George	67
"School for Scandal, The"	63, 72
Scott, J. R.	28
Scott, Sir Walter	84
Servia, "Virginius"	30
Sharpe, Mrs.	24, 27
Shaw, Mrs.	25, 26
As Hamlet, &c.	123, 125
Siddons, Mrs.	37
As Hamlet, &c.	121, 162, 163
"Siege of Rochelle, The"	27
Simpson, Mr.	20, 39, 48, 52
Simpson, Mrs., "Simpson and Company" ..	71, 73, 75
Skerrett, Mrs.	161
Shaw, Mrs., as Hamlet	25, 53
Smith, Mrs. W. H.	127
Snapley, "The Dancing Barber"	32, 34
"Soldier's Daughter, The"	33

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Somerton, Mrs., "My Neighbor's Wife".....	25
"Speed the Plough".....	22
Spanker, Lady Gay, "London Assurance," 47,	
51, 71, 72, 160	
Squeers, Miss, "Nicholas Nickleby".....	29, 30, 31, 32
Stebbins, Miss.....	68, 145, <i>Preface</i>
Stage-struck Girls.....	1, 44
Stoddard, poet.....	168
Stoddard, Mrs. J. G.....	76
Stone, Albany Historian.....	21, 43
"Stoops to Conquer, She".....	66
Story.....	54
"Strange Gentleman, The".....	24
"Stranger, The".....	62, 63, 71, 75, 158, 162
Studley.....	76
Sullen, Mrs., "The Beaux Stratagem".....	51
"Suspicious Husband, The".....	51
Swansborough, Miss.....	66
Sykes, Nancy.....	29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 75
Lawrence Barrett on.....	116
Wemyss on.....	117
Vandenhoff.....	117
Tasistro.....	33
Taylor, Bayard.....	68
Teazle, Lady, "The School for Scandal".....	27, 31,
33, 63, 76	
"Tell, William".....	25
Terry.....	84
Theodore, "Lafitte".....	30
"Timour, The Tartar".....	35
Tisbe, La, "The Actress of Padua".....	73, 162
Thorne, Mrs.....	126
"Tom and Jerry".....	33

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
Tom Tug, "The Waterman".....	23
"Tom Noddy's Secret".....	30, 31, 32
"Town and Country".....	51
Townley, Lady, "The Provoked Husband".....	66
Tree, Ellen.....	25, 28
Her Romeo.....	121, 128
Her Ion.....	127
Tric Trac, Mrs., "The Married Rake".....	24, &c.
Trollope, Mrs.....	37
Tullia, "Brutus".....	29
"Twelfth Night".....	64
"Twin Brothers, The".....	28
Ursula, "Rienzi".....	80, 31
Vandenhoff.....	32, 33, 39, 52, 157
"Venice Preserved".....	35
Vernon, Mrs.....	36
Vestris, Madam.....	39, 129
Viola, "Twelfth Night".....	64
Victorine, "Victorine".....	33
"Virginus".....	30
Vittoria, "Knight of the Golden Fleece".....	24, 27
Volumnia, "Coriolanus".....	32
"Walder, the Avenger".....	51
Wallack.....	23, 37
Mr. J. W., Jr.....	76
As Romeo, Mrs. J. W., Jr.....	127
Warde, Frederick.....	82, 175
Waring, Miss.....	129
"Ways and Means".....	31
"Weller, Sam".....	26, 33
Wemyss.....	50, 117

INDEX.

	<i>Page</i>
" West End ".....	51
" What Will the World Say ? ".....	51
Wheatley.....	36
Wheeler, A. C.....	49, 175
" Wife, The ".....	28, 63
" Wild Oats ".....	27
Wilkins, Peter, " Peter Wilkins ".....	30, 31
Williams, Mrs., as Richard III.....	123
As Paul Pry.....	129
Winter, William.....	81, 176
Winter Garden.....	75
Woffington, Peg.....	122
Wolsey, " Henry VIII ".....	75, 121, 142
" Woman's Wit ".....	28
Women, Lesson to.....	180
Women in male characters.....	119, &c.
Woods, The.....	11, 12, 122
Woolgar, Miss.....	122
Worthington, Emily, " The Poor Gentleman ".....	51
Zamine, " The Cataract of the Ganges ".....	26, 27
Zorilda, " Timour, the Tartar ".....	35
Zu-Zu, " Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zu ".....	26
Zuliema, " Abon Hassan ".....	25, 26, 27, 28, 32



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